United Nations S/PV.7848

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7848th meeting
Wednesday, 21 December 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. González de Linares Palou	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Casimiro
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Klein
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-45247 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council recalls the press statement of the Council members on 10 December 2016, and takes note of the communiqué of the Chairman of the African Union (AU) on 10 December 2016, as well as the joint communiqué of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) on 10 December 2016 regarding the situation in the Islamic Republic of the Gambia (the Gambia).

"The Security Council welcomes and is encouraged by the decisions on the political situation in the Gambia of the fiftieth Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority, held in Abuja on 17 December 2016, and the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council at its six-hundred and forty-fourth meeting, held on 12 December 2016, and of the African Union to recognize Mr. Adama Barrow as President-elect of the Gambia.

"The Security Council reiterates its request to outgoing President Jammeh and the relevant Gambian authorities to fully respect the results of the presidential election of 1 December 2016, to respect the will of the Gambian people and to carry out a peaceful and orderly transition process, and to transfer power to President-elect Adama Barrow by 19 January 2017 in accordance with the Gambian Constitution. The Security Council further welcomes the decision of ECOWAS Heads of State to attend the 19 January inauguration of President-elect Barrow in Banjul.

"The Security Council commends the initiatives of ECOWAS, including the visit of an ECOWAS/United Nations high-level delegation to Banjul on 13 December 2016, led by Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority, aimed at ensuring a peaceful and orderly transition process in the Gambia.

"The Security Council welcomes the appointment by ECOWAS of His Excellency Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as the Mediator in the Gambia, and His Excellency Mr. John Dramani Manama, President of the Republic of Ghana, as the Co-chair.

"The Security Council recalls its members' request that the security of President-elect Adama Barrow, and that of all Gambian citizens, be fully ensured, and supports the decision of the ECOWAS fiftieth session in this regard.

"The Security Council further requests that the Gambian defence and security forces demonstrate maximum restraint to maintain an atmosphere of calm in Banjul.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General, including through his Special Representative, in collaboration with the relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, to facilitate, as appropriate, political dialogue between the Gambian stakeholders in order to ensure a peaceful transition of power in the Gambia and in full respect of the outcome of the presidential election as recognized by ECOWAS and the AU, and to provide technical assistance to the ECOWAS mediation where required.

"In this regard, the Security Council emphasises the important role of Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of UNOWAS, in the current political situation in the Gambia.

"The Security Council further welcomes and reiterates its full support for the continued efforts of the AU and ECOWAS to promote peace, stability and good governance in the region.

"The security Council expresses its intention to continue to follow the situation in the Gambia closely."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2016/19.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7849th meeting
Wednesday, 21 December 2016, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. González de Linares Palou	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Casimiro
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Klein
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/1057)

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16-45253 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/1057)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1077, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the Egypt, New Zealand and Spain.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/1057, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015).

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2332 (2016).

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7850

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7850th meeting

Friday, 23 December 2016, 9.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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16-45852 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1085, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

France, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:

Angola, China, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Senegal, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received seven votes in favour, with eight abstentions The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Power (United States of America): This should not have been a contentions draft resolution (S/2016/1085). The United States proposed a draft resolution meant to show that the architects of mass atrocities and those who defy the demands of the Security Council day in and day would face consequences. We urged members of the Council to stand with South Sudan's people, who are suffering immesely due to the actions of their leaders. And we urged that we use an arms embargo and targeted sanctions to help end the culture of impunity and reduce — at least — the violence. We are grateful to those who supported this effort.

Some Council members decided to prevent the Council from acting, from heeding the pleas of the Secretary-General, who has been appealing for these steps for more than a year. History is going to be a very hard judge of their decision. The atrocities in South Sudan and the displacement into neighbouring countries are increasing every day. A number of false arguments have been made in recent days, and I would just like to address them head-on.

Some have said that this draft resolution should have imposed either an arms embargo or targeted sanctions, but not both. They argued that putting both the arms embargo and the designations into the same draft resolution was costing us votes and that we might be able to get the draft resolution adopted if we just submitted a clean arms embargo or clean designations. That is just false. We told every abstaining country — all eight abstainers on the arms embargo and the designations — that we were completely open to doing a clearn arms embargo or clean designations to try to get at the culture of impunity and the leading architects of theviolence. In response, we were told that a change of that nature would not earn us a single vote. We engaged every member who abstained in the voting. Let nobody say, in retrospect, "Had only the Americans put forward half of what they included in that draft resolution, we would have been fine". That is false.

Secondly, some have said — and this is a memorable quote for me — "We need actions not sanctions". That is an exact quote. But the representative who said that and all the other abstainers proposed no actions. Not one of them came forward despite repeated pleas from me personally and everybody who is part of the United States Mission and is working on this issue. No one came forward to say, "Okay, do not do this, but let us do this instead. Here is an idea. Here is something that we can rally behind". Instead what the abstainers have rallied behind is treading water, and it does in fact constitute the definition of insanity, which is to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result.

The road to how we got here, I believe, illustrates that. After another serious outbreak of violence in July, the Security Council made a set of demands (see S/PV.7730). We demanded unfettered access for all people in South Sudan. Some 1,830,000 people are

internally displaced in South Sudan, and approximately 4.8 million people — more than half the country — are severely food insecure. When we made those demands, and the Government of South Sudan failed to comply. We demanded that the Government of South Sudan stop blocking peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) from carrying out their mandate. We saw in person and heard from contingent commanders and troops that they needed written permission 48 hours in advance to be able to move in convoys to protect people, even though they had a civilian-protection mandate. We therefore demanded that the movement be improved and increased with freedom of movement. The Government of South Sudan failed to comply.

We authorized the immediate deployment of a new UNMISS regional protection force to help improve security around the capital. The Government failed to comply. The situation then grew worse on our watch, and we regularly received briefings from United Nations folks who were doing their best to sound the alarm. We heard on television, radio and online sources a dramatic increase in vile rhetoric wherein people were inciting ethnic tensions, as Government officials did little to stop it, despite muzzling the media in a whole series of other respects. Soldiers began preparing in very overt ways for large-scale attacks, including, at least, 4,000 militia recently staged in the Equatorias.

The Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Head of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide all issued their warnings. They came here, and the lights flashed red — not yellow and certainly not green. It does not happen in the Security Council very often when a string of United Nations officials comes and describes the gravity of what lies ahead. The Secretary-General used his last appearance here (see S/PV.7846) on the subject of South Sudan to appeal to us to take heed of his warning and that of all of his team. Three thousand people on average have fled South Sudan into Uganda every single day this month. Is that because the situation is getting better or is stable? With 3,000 people fleeing every day and fearing for their lives, that is why we felt that we had to bring this draft resolution to a vote. It has been hanging around. We have tried to solicit textual input and changes and said that we are flexible while, again, we heard nothing in reply.

Had it been adopted, this draft resolution would not have been a panacea. We are not naive. It would have not solved the underlying political crisis at the heart of what has divided South Sudan, but the arms embargo would have had some significant effects. It would have made it impossible for the Government of South Sudan to continue to use the precious resources at its disposal to buy heavy weapons armaments. Would their have been smuggling — an issue I heard raised by a lot of Council members? Of course, there would have been smuggling, but we would have significantly reduced arms sales by United Nations Member States to a fellow United Nations Member State that, instead of feeding its people, is amping and arming up for a conflict that is becoming increasingly ethnic in nature.

The individual sanctions targeted three individuals Paul Malong, Riek Machar and Michael Makuei with asset freezes and travel bans. People asked what good would asset freezes and travel bans really do? Those are three leaders with lengthy résumés for fuelling violence. They have stoked ethnic conflicts, unleashed violence against civilians and, especially in the cases of Mr. Malong and Mr. Makuei, attempted to portray UNMISS as a party to the conflict. Members of the Council have all seen the rhetoric. Many of them have soldiers who are on the ground in South Sudan. Those soldiers are more vulnerable because of the threats and the caricatures that those individuals have put out concerning UNMISS, while conveying that the Mission is just a tool of the opposition. That is a vulnerability for all of our people who are present on the ground whether they be aid workers, diplomats, private citizens or peacekeepers.

The adoption of the draft resolution would have shown that, at least when it came to the people who were doing the most to stoke the atrocities and the violence, there would have been costs. Would the designations have changed the world? The answer is no, but does sending a signal and message of impunity — as we have doing every day that we have not voted on those designations, even though we know the record of the individuals involved — do so? A record of impunity and that inability to impose a cost as a Council is a green light, and that is a green light with which everyone who abstained in the voting of this draft resolution is going to have to live.

What is the alternative? I know people on the Council care a lot about South Sudan. Many of us travelled together to the region a couple of times over

the past year. Is the alternative just to trust that South Sudan's leaders are going to change course? There are some really principled people in the South Sudanese Government, and they are outnumbered or outranked. There are such individuals. We all talked to them. We know that there are people of good will who would like to change course, but, unfortunately, not least because of the actions of two of the people whom we designated in the Government, that has proven to be something that the Government is not prepared to do. Do we just then sit on our hands until the Government calls off the militia and stop some of the most significant sexual violence that he have seen in any conflict in our life times?

The Council members who did not support this draft resolution are taking a big gamble that South Sudan's leaders will not instigate a catastrophe. If those Council members are wrong — and every report that we have heard in this Chamber suggests that they are — it is the people of South Sudan who will pay an unbearable price. It was not an easy decision for us to propose this draft resolution. We debated it deep into the night because having a draft resolution that is not adopted, of course, is not how one wants to spend one's day. I believe that the South Sudanese people were watching for the outcome of this vote, and we knew the signal that this would send. At a certain point, drifting along and internalizing the constraints imposed by those Council members who do not want to take action in the face of the violence, that is not an option. We learned that from Rwanda, Srebrenica and chapters past.

The next time that soldiers and armed groups fire on civilians, the next time that the Government prevents peacekeepers from going on patrol, which has probably already happened during the time that I have been speaking, and the next time that a village goes hungry because the Government withholds permission for an aid delivery, each of us will need to find a way to justify our response. The leaders of South Sudan should not misinterpret this vote. All of us will be watching closely what happens on the ground. The abuses will continue to be publicized. We will continue to hear appeals from the United Nations about what it feels it needs in order to reduce violence on the ground. We will continue to be relentless in demanding accountability, and we will be ready to return to the Council to vote again on the proposed arms embargo and targeted sanctions as soon as those who did not support action today come to understand the human costs of imposing no cost for attacking civilians, for importing massive amounts of arms instead of feeding one's people and for not pursuing the cause of peace.

All of us have the opportunity to make an explanation of vote today. I would be very grateful to those who abstained in the voting to clarify what it will take and what they are for that we have not already tried.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Three years ago, almost to the day, the conflict in South Sudan began. In those three years, civilians have been the target of unspeakable violence and abuse, amply documented by the United Nations, the African Union and civil society organizations. The situation in South Sudan continues to be one of the worst in the world. The humanitarian consequences are tragic and the needs of the population are staggering. The security situation remains very volatile and, over the past weeks, the Security Council has considered the risks of retaliation and intensification, as well as violence and mass atrocities. The special session of the Human Rights Council, held last week in Geneva, underscored our collective concern over the grim state of affairs.

In that context, France deeply regrets that the draft resolution submitted by the United States could not garner the necessary support in the Council to be adopted. As is well-known and as we have expressed on several occasions in this Chamber, France has long supported an arms embargo on South Sudan. We regret that it was not proposed earlier, when it could have enjoyed broad support from the Council. In our eyes, such a measure is fully warranted by the imperative of protecting civilians. The steady inflow of arms into South Sudan fuels violence by creating the illusion that a military solution to the conflict is possible. In the hands of the enemies of peace, those weapons facilitate the commission of the worst abuses against civilians. It is the responsibility of the Council to do all that it can to reduce that risk and the arms embargo would surely have helped.

The embargo could have also helped the political process by changing the equation for those who favour a military solution. It could have been a push for peace. Its contribution to reducing violence could have brought about a favourable environment and conciliatory political dialogue. As the Council has affirmed repeatedly, a lasting solution to the violence in South Sudan can only be political and an embargo could have helped.

A few days ago, the Council unanimously renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (see PV.7840). As the population of South Sudan is at the mercy of violence and abuse, we hope that the Council will once again unanimously decide to come to their aid. Let us be aware of our shared responsibility to prevent a new cycle of mass atrocities in South Sudan, as the Secretary-General has warned us about, and to bring about a positive dynamic. Today's vote only highlights the need for the Council to remain mobilized to work for peace and security in South Sudan.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Today, the Security Council had a chance to show that we would no longer tolerate business as usual in South Sudan. Tragically, for the people of South Sudan, we have been unable to do so. For a long time it has been clear to many of us in the Chamber that a different approach was needed, that different pressure needed to be brought to bear. Despite repeated promises, repeated atrocities, repeated warnings of ethnic violence, the fighting has continued to rage and the fragile peace agreement has continued to sour.

That is why the United Kingdom has long advocated for an arms embargo on South Sudan. Today, we had a chance to curb the flow of weapons and to save lives. It is why we advocated targeting those individuals who have fuelled the violence — individuals at the top of both the Government and the opposition. We had a chance today to show those individuals that there are very real repercussions for their role in that war. But instead, we have done nothing. We have done nothing despite knowing what is really at stake. We can all recall Adama Dieng's grave warning to this Council just two weeks ago. He spoke of hateful rhetoric, of ethnic divides. He spoke of possible genocide. If the dire situation in South Sudan spirals into that tragic place, we will all need to examine our consciences.

And Adama's warning was just the tip of the iceberg. We should not forget that atrocities have already been committed in South Sudan. Sites established for the protection of civilians have instead been the scenes of murder, robbery and rape. Millions have uprooted their lives and fled their homes. Families have been destroyed and tens of thousands have been killed in a country that went from one civil war to another. We have done nothing to reduce the number of weapons at the disposal of those who would choose to commit those unspeakable acts. We have welcomed the repeated promises and offers of the Government and the opposition to stop fighting and to work towards a political process. We welcomed the Government's announcements to conduct an inclusive national dialogue and we welcomed their commitment to the deployment of a regional protection force.

But the reality does not reflect kindly on those promises. In reality, the United Nations Mission continues to face chronic restrictions. In reality, the humanitarian situation has gotten worse, not better and people are suffering. In reality, they are voting with their feet. Up to 6,000 people per day fled for Uganda this month.

That is the reality that we needed to change. Words are not good enough. We must now see concrete action resulting from those promises. Today we had a chance to take a small step towards changing this reality, and yet we have been failed to do so. Inaction today does not abscond us all of our responsibilities. In fact, it places an even heavier burden on us. The Security Council, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and all parties to the conflict in South Sudan have a responsibility to redouble our efforts for peace in the year ahead. The people of South Sudan have asked for it for long enough.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has followed closely the situation in South Sudan. My country is committed to expeditiously restoring peace and stability to South Sudan so that the people there can enjoy peace dividends as soon as possible. Recently President Salva Kiir announced the launching of a national dialogue and the unconditional acceptance of the deployment of the Regional Protection Force.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held a summit on South Sudan and issued a communiqué. The international community should seize this opportunity to push for various bodies in South Sudan to continue with the implementation of a peace agreement in order to return to the track of finding a political solution. The leading role of IGAD in mediating the South Sudan issue should be supported so that peace, stability and development can be realized as soon as possible.

We hold that there should be prudent action with respect to sanctions and we believe that sanctions should serve the interest of an overall political solution. We are not in favour of using sanctions to exert pressure on developing countries. The transitional Government of South Sudan has demonstrated the political will to implement relevant Council resolution

and joint communiqués. The IGAD communiqué does not support the imposition of an embargo or sanctions. The legitimate aspirations of IGAD and African countries must be fully respected. Council actions should be conducive to the political solution of the South Sudanese issue, helpful to the work of the mediation and good offices of IGAD and the African Union and must contribute to maintaining the unity of the Council. There needs to be prudent action with respect to embargoes and designations in order to avoid complicating the situation even further in South Sudan.

China has consistently supported the peace process and provided active assistance to South Sudan in its nation-building and stability. Recently, theSpecial Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs visited South Sudan and the region to encourage the relevant actors to engage with one another in peace negotiations. China is willing to work with the international community to continue with its constructive role in efforts towards enduring peace and stability in South Sudan.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia, likw many other delegations, abstained in the voting on the Security Council draft resolution on expanding the sanctions regime against South Sudan. That is because there are profound concerns about the content of the document and the work conducted on it. We think that it is abnormal when serious work on settling the situation in the South Sudan is undermined by the senseless use of such sanctions. But that is typical of the sort of geopolitical engineering that the Western countries have been using against South Sudan and other countries. In the past, it was used against the united Sudan in order to dismember it into two States.

We have a question for the delegation of the United States. How does that delegation assess United States activities on this issue? Having been unsuccessful in South Sudan, the United States is now attempting to use the Security Council for its own purposes, including through the pointless expansion of sanctions. We do not want to share the responsibility for the disastrous consequences of such a short-sighted policy. We are also against the high-handed, unceremonious conduct of the sponsors of the resolution. By putting it to a vote, they have not just ignored the opinion of a number of Council delegations, they have also disregarded the decisions of regional players, which have stated that new Security Council restrictions were counterproductive for the peace settlement process. They were also not bothered by the legitimate concerns of South Sudan's troop- and police-contributing countries, which quite rightly have misgivings about the negative impact of new sanctions on relations between the host country and the Blue Helmets.

The sponsors do not want to acknowledge the progress and cooperation achieved between Juba and the United Nations. President Kiir has categorically agreed to receive the Regional Protection Force. There has been serious progress in the peace settlement process, including the successful work of the Transitional Government of National Unity and its practical steps to launch inclusive, national dialogue and an amnesty for Machar's supporters. Once again, the sponsors of the draft resolution closed their eyes to all of that.

We would also like to point out the inconsistency in the American delegation's interpretation of the priorities of United Nations peacekeeping. At the Security Council meeting on 20 November 2015 on the future of United Nations peace operations, which included a discussion of the report of the Secretary-General on the outcomes of the United Nations peacekeeping review (S/2015/682), the representative of the United States stated that,

> "We agree with the Secretary-General that political settlements that promote peaceful and inclusive societies and help advance human rights are key to preventing conflict and interrupting cycles of violence. We have a vested interest in ensuring that, in those places where we have deployed peacekeeping missions, we are equally engaged in advancing the political process" (*S/PV.7564, p.12*).

It is doubtful that sanctioning the leaders of South Sudan and of the opposition would facilitate the building of a more inclusive society or the forging a political process. On the contrary, such steps would only exacerbate the animosity between the various ethnic groups and the escalation of tension. We would also like to point out that in resolution 2327 (2016), which extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the sponsors defined the Mission's task to facilitate the political process as being the last priority. They did not heed the proposal of a number of delegations to make it at least a second priority.

In sum therefore, we would like to express our satisfaction about the responsible position taken by a large number of Security Council members not to allow today's destructive draft resolution on South Sudan

to be adopted. In so doing, we managed to prevent the emergence of new problems in the settlement process and in relations between the host country, the peacekeeping Mission and the international community as a whole.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): The issue of the arms embargo in South Sudan has been the subject of intense debate in recent months. While it is a matter of urgency, some delegations continuously advocate second-chance diplomacy. Ukraine is all in favour of using diplomacy as the primary path towards the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan. However, we have a couple of simple questions. How many more second chances should the parties in South Sudan be given to stop the deliberate killing of civilians, the rape of women and girls, and the incitement to ethnic violence? How many more towns and villages must be burnt before the Council reaches a consensus on further action?

South Sudan is on the verge of chaos. The conflict has touched almost every South Sudanese family, ruining hopes for a peaceful future. To give just one example — the town of Yei in the south-west was once considered one of the safest places in South Sudan, but not any more. Once bustling streets are now deserted, schools and hospitals closed, and stores and markets looted. Government soldiers patrol neighbourhoods with Kalashnikovs in their hands. No-go zones are controlled by rebels. More than half of the town's population has fled, and those who remain live in a fear of being murdered, raped, arrested or disappeared.

Is that something that the international community chooses to tolerate in the twenty-first century? Are we ready to ignore yet another looming human tragedy that, if not stopped, can lead to irreparable consequences. The answer is obvious. We must not let the South Sudanese people share the grief of Srebrenica, Rwanda or Aleppo.

With that in mind, Ukraine voted in favour of the resolution. We are fully conscious that it does not represent a solution in itself. However, we are convinced that the arms embargo and additional targeted sanctions would reduce the ability of the parties to continue fuelling the conflict in South Sudan. It would help to silence the already procured military equipment and stop the spending of desperately needed financial resources on new weaponry. The arms embargo is not a punishment, but a prerequisite and a tool for peace. We regret that the Council was not able to use it.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan shares the deep concern regarding the ongoing violence and the serious humanitarian situation in South Sudan. It should be noted, however, that there has been some progress since late November, most notably the 25 November decision by the Council of Ministers of the Transitional Government, which consented to the full and immediate deployment of the Regional Protection Force, and President Kiir's 14 December speech to the Parliament on an inclusive national dialogue. We are encouraged by the demonstration of political will by the President.

Such commitments would be meaningless if their implementation were delayed, and, in that case, it is the South Sudanese people who would suffer. What is absolutely necessary is for the Transitional Government to swiftly translate those commitments into concrete actions in order to prevent large-scale violence and for it to cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, including by expediting the deployment of the Regional Protection Force.

Japan believes that it would be counterproductive to introduce additional sanctions measures at a time when the Transitional Government is making some positive moves. The Council must continue to engage with the Transitional Government. Japan believes that there is still room for diplomatic efforts aimed at urging the Transitional Government to make further progress. All the parties and actors can play a significant role, individually or collectively.

Our Prime Minister's special envoy visited Juba just this week to urge action by the South Sudanese leadership, including President Kiir, on those issues. We will continue to make such efforts. Japan remains strongly committed to the well-being of the people of South Sudan and to the country's long-term development. Japan will continue to contribute to South Sudan's peace and security.

Concrete actions on the part of the Transitional Government are key. The international community, including the Security Council, will closely monitor the situation on the ground. We should also recall resolution 2327 (2016), including paragraph 10, which the Council adopted unanimously. Japan decided to abstain on today's draft resolution for the aforementioned reasons. Japan's abstention today should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the status quo or an attitude of wait-and-see. The Council should remain seized of the matter.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Just a week ago, we all were here in the Council Chamber, having just unanimously adopted resolution 2327 (2016). The unanimous adoption of that resolution demonstrated the Council's strong support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and our resolve on South Sudan. They were tedious negotiations, but our collective desire to find consensus prevailed. Our collective aim was to support the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan towards restoring lasting peace and stability in the country.

The Council is strongest when it speaks in one voice. After the unanimous adoption of resolution 2327 (2016), we would have hoped for more concerted efforts by all Council members to support the full implementation of the resolution.

Malaysia commends the leadership role and solidarity shown by the regional partners, namely, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in mediating dialogue towards restoring peace and stability in South Sudan. These regional partners have continued to play an instrumental role by engaging the parties in the political process and pledging support to the Regional Protection Force despite the challenging circumstances.

In this context, IGAD had clearly stated that dialogue, reconciliation and commitment by all South Sudanese parties to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan are required for permanent peace and stability in South Sudan. It is unfortunate that the perspective and positions of IGAD, as well as those of the partners and countries in the region, have not been taken on board.

Furthermore, we are appreciative of the South Sudanese Government's ongoing efforts and its decision to fully and unconditionally implement resolution 2304 (2016) and its joint communiqué with the Security Council, as well as the recent announcements by President Kiir to convene an inclusive national dialogue. These are positive developments. It would have been better and more productive if the Council had seized these opportunities and devoted more time and energy to working with the South Sudanese parties towards realizing these commitments.

Malaysia believes that united Council resolutions could be built upon to ensure greater success on South Sudan. This is, sadly, glaringly lacking today. It is therefore with much regret that Malaysia was compelled to abstain today. Having followed the developments in South Sudan closely, we believe that it is ever more important for Council members to remain united in charting a comprehensive and effective strategy to support the efforts of the South Sudanese authorities and to implement the peace agreement, protect civilians and restore peace and stability in the country.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation deplores the fact that the Council has once again failed to reach a united position concerning a key question that falls under the mandate of the Security Council to on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Less than a week ago, we managed to adopt unanimously resolution 2327 (2016), which dealt with the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan following very difficult negotiations. The Council sent an important message to the parties to the conflict, and we deemed that an important step in order to put an end to the attacks that have been ongoing for more than three years now.

Certain countries are asking that the Council be united, but these same countries are hardly willing to take into account the considerations and concerns expressed by other countries, including the countries in the region, which are the ones that are most concerned and are in the best position to assess the very delicate situation in the region.

The presidents of the countries members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) also refused the sanctions on the basis of the fact that sanctions would not contribute to a solution.

The resort to threats such as those contained in the draft resolution submitted today (S/2016/1085) has already proved to be ineffective in putting an end to crises in the Sudan and elsewhere. Such measures will not change reality at all and certainly not contribute to improving the situation of civilians in South Sudan. But this is an easy solution, and some prefer such solutions to genuine efforts that could strengthen dialogue and help to resolve the crisis. Some prefer such solutions to efforts to address the causes of conflicts in order to resolve them; they prefer them to efforts at comprehensive reconciliation and the creation of a national identity that would unite all the people of South Sudan.

Our abstention does not mean that we implicitly approve of the abuses committed in South Sudan, nor does not mean that we are unaware of the scope of the humanitarian crisis. We are perfectly aware of the scope of the crisis, and we are working to put an end to it. We call upon all of the parties in South Sudan to assume their full responsibility to alleviate the suffering of their fellow citizens, and we call upon them to fulfill the aspirations that accompanied the emergence of their young country.

I should like to reiterate here that the patience of the international community and the understanding shown by some regional parties vis-à-vis the specificities of the situation in South Sudan should in no way be viewed as consent in connection with the deaths of innocent people and human rights violations.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): After considering the draft resolution (S/2016/1085), our delegation decided to abstain, without prejudice to the fact that we believe that the current situation in South Sudan requires urgent, decisive, coordinated and consensual action on the part of the Security Council in order to tackle the situation effectively and comprehensively, so as to help to stabilize the situation and achieve a lasting peace and to ensure the socioeconomic development of the brotherly people of South Sudan.

However, with respect to sanctions, everyone is aware of our delegation's principled position. In that respect, I would like to reiterate that Venezuela considers such measures as a tool and not as an end in themselves. Such instruments can have a positive impact only if they are intrinsically linked to a clearly defined political strategy.

In the case of South Sudan, our delegation believes that such a strategy does not exist, as was pointed out by the Secretary-General in one of his most recent reports. We therefore believe that not only should we pool our efforts in order to revitalize the political process in the country, but we must also move forward in drawing up a clear political strategy in order to tackle comprehensively the conflict that has ravaged the country for the past three years, in close coordination with the country and other organizations in the region.

We also agree with the unanimous position of the countries of the region in their recognition of the need to prevent the situation on the ground from escalating. In our opinion, had we adopted this draft resolution, we would have run the risk of, inter alia, moving in that direction. Without a negotiating process being held, a proposal was made to target one of the main parties to the peace agreement, which serves as a framework for the resolution of the crisis in South Sudan, as was expressed by the Security Council in the press communiqué issued on 18 November and in the recently adopted resolution 2327 (2016) renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. It is very unlikely that we would call for the full implementation of the agreement and at the same time wish to impose specific sanctions on one of the signatories. There is no link between sanctions and the political strategy to resolve the crisis.

The same applies with the attempt to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan. Even though we concur that there is a significant flow of illicit arms into the country, many of those weapons have been there since the beginning of the conflict. We believe that we should favour, among other things, the adoption of effective disarmament measures and the cantonment of troops, taking into account the transitional security provisions that are included in the peace agreement that the Security Council has underscored should serve as the basis for resolving the conflict in South Sudan. Furthermore, we have serious reservations about the overall effectiveness of an arms embargo as a tool for putting an end to the illicit flow of weapons, bearing in mind the experience in other conflict situations.

In reiterating today our position that we should promote an African solution to African problems, we endorse the unanimous position of the region on this matter that the imposition of an arms embargo or sanctions on South Sudan would not offer the solution that is sought in our efforts to achieve a lasting peace and the stability of the country. What is needed is rather a dialogue, a reconciliation and the commitment of the parties to implement the peace agreement with the support of the region and the international community.

Lastly, our delegation is convinced that our African brothers, in particular the people of South Sudan, will understand our position. We regret the fact that the spirit of unity, which should characterize the work of the Security Council, once again was not able to be achieved in this case. We hope that future discussions will assist in achieving consensual approaches that could truly have a positive impact on the situation on the ground.

Mr. Martins (Angola): Like other members, Angola abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2016/1085, which sought to target sanctions and an arms embargo against the Government and authorities of South Sudan. Recently, the Government of South Sudan has continued to show its commitment to the implementation of the joint communiqué between the Transitional Government of National Unity and the Security Council on the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. And in our latest Council discussion on the topic, which took place on 19 December (see S/PV.7846), Angola noted with appreciation the steps taken by the Government to support the operationalization of the Force.

Angola welcomes the decision that President Kiir recently announced to launch a national inclusive dialogue. At this stage, the Council, instead of moving in the direction of applying sanctions, should continue to monitor the decisions announced and encourage the Government to move forward on that path. Several positive developments were recorded in the various states of the country, such as the approval of the deployment sites in Central Equatorial. We believe that in due time, again through dialogue, the parties, namely, the United Nations and the Government of National Unity, will agree on the necessary arrangements and agreements.

In our view, sanctions against South Sudan must not be the priority of the United Nations. Rather, the United Nations should focus in South Sudan more on supporting the political dialogue with the aim of implementing the peace agreement. That would be in line with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which underscored that an arms embargo or sanctions on South Sudan would not provide the requisite solution leading to permanent peace and stability in the country. IGAD stressed again that what is required is dialogue, reconciliation and the commitment by all the South Sudanese parties to fully implement the peace agreement. The African Union has also adopted the IGAD position. We feel that the Council should reinforce and encourage that position.

Angola is fully committed to the path of sustainable peace and stability through dialogue, which is a better way to solve conflicts, including this particular conflict in South Sudan. For that reason we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2016/1085, not because we favour inaction or we are questioning the abuse that has been committed, but rather because, while condemning the human rights violations and other violations that are continuing to be perpetrated by all the parties in the South Sudanese conflict, we are convinced that in its quest for stability, that country needs a sustainable peace. In our opinion, such an approach requires an ongoing investment on the part of the Security Council, which we have already witnessed through the several actions that it has taken during the year, including the visit by the Council in the month of September, and the visit just made by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. But we need a united approach, above all, one that is in close coordination with the organizations and countries of the subregion. I am thinking, in particular, of IGAD and its members, which have an important role to play.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes and strongly encourages the efforts of IGAD and the countries of the subregion. I am thinking in particular of the recent visit that made by President Museveni of Uganda to Juba to encourage the South Sudanese authorities to put an end to their hostilities and to focus on the political process. We also believe that, given the humanitarian urgency and the importance of protecting civilians, we have to act effectively. We are convinced that, as the Security Council, we must begin a dynamic and constructive dialogue with the Transitional Government of National Unity. We encourage it to fulfil its commitments, as soon as possible, to relaunch a national dialogue and to deploy the Regional Protection Force. But that dialogue must also be conducted with the other subregional organizations, such as IGAD and the African Union, and it should deal with the main aspects of stabilization in South Sudan, namely, the implementation of the peace agreement, security-sector reform, the protection of civilians, human rights and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Once again, we believe that it is our responsibility to support the people of South Sudan, who are, after all, the ones who suffer most from the current situation.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay voted in favour of draft resolution S/2016/1085. We are aware of the grave humanitarian, human rights and security situation that South Sudan is experiencing as a result of a profound political crisis, and of the fact that those responsible for that crisis are the main political and military leaders. We regret that the draft

resolution put to the vote today could not garner the necessary amount of positive votes for its adoption. My delegation believes that, given the critical current situation in the country, the implementation of the measures provided for in the draft resolution would have helped to bolster political dialogue and avoid further loss of civilian lives.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in the Security Council on Monday, 19 December, an arms embargo "would diminish the capacity of all sides in the conflict to wage war" (*S/PV. 7846, p. 2*). Without the embargo, South Sudan would continue to be in permanent confrontation. An arms embargo would also clearly contribute to stopping the proliferation of weapons around the country, which, given the current situation of instability and insecurity, has proven to be a risk factor and an ongoing threat to the civilian population. As we have already said, the embargo would have facilitated dialogue and negotiation and, moreover, would have allowed the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan to carry out its work with more guarantees.

Uruguay reiterates that the Government has the primary responsibility for protecting its own citizens. It must provide such protection regardless of its citizens' ethnic origin or political affiliation. Therefore, the political leaders of South Sudan must act responsibly and reject any incitement of violence, while at the same time committing themselves to the path of dialogue. On that point, we urge all parties to join in a process of inclusive and transparent dialogue, with a view to achieving reconciliation and peace in the country so as to put an end to the long suffering of its inhabitants.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand voted in favour of today's draft resolution. For many months, New Zealand has argued that an arms embargo on South Sudan is needed as part of the international response to the continuing conflict. It is also a measure that has been strongly and repeatedly called for by the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for over a year. We are very disappointed that the Council has failed to respond to those requests.

We recognize that an arms embargo will not resolve the conflict. However, it will go a long way towards addressing the overabundance of weapons, which are being used against civilians. It undoubtedly further fuels the conflict. We also recognize the concern expressed by some that an arms embargo and targeted sanctions would upset any political process. However, in our view, those measures would only help create the conditions for peace on the ground and would, in turn, support the political process when it gets underway. Yet, right now we are seeing a lot more fighting and killing than talking.

We have been warned by the United Nations of the possibility of much graver developments. Ignoring those warnings and preserving space for a currently non-existent dialogue seems to us to not make a lot of sense. We are concerned that what we are seeing today is another example of a country where a Council-mandated mission is operating under very difficult conditions. The country is doing just enough to satisfy the Council — doing the minimum to avoid the imposition of measures that the Council itself had forecast, but not demonstrating any meaningful commitment to changing the dangerous course upon which it has embarked. As New Zealand leaves the Council, we urge Council members not to allow differences over the draft resolution to distract from and prevent unified and effective leadership on the critical issues that face the people of South Sudan and the peacekeeping mission on the ground.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Spain.

Spain voted in favour the draft resolution, in which we proposed the establishment of an arms embargo on South Sudan. We believe that such a measure, which was requested by the Secretary-General, is absolutely necessary in order to provide a response to the security and humanitarian situation, which has been described by experts as catastrophic and unsustainable. We have been defending such measures for some time, and we regret the fact that we were not able to adopt them.

The arms embargo is a necessary measure but, unfortunately, it is not enough. There are signs that the conflict is running the grave risk of becoming an ethnic war. The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, warned us about a month ago about the risk of genocide. I would like also to reiterate that my delegation has never felt that sanctions were an end in themselves. Rather, we simply believe that sanctions would reduce violence on the ground.

Lastly, a week after the adoption of resolution 2327 (2016), in which we renewed the mandate of the United

Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Spain would like to reiterate its appeal for the urgency of proceeding to the deployment and full implementation of the Regional Protection Force. We take note of the commitment assumed by the Transitional Government of National Unity, but we must now transition from words to actions, and we must do so immediately. It is crucial for UNMISS to be able to operate without restrictions in order to comply with its mandate, particularly with respect to the protection of civilians and the safe and unhindered distribution of humanitarian assistance.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malok (South Sudan): At the outset, let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and members of the Security Council for giving me another opportunity to address the Council on this important issue of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against my country. The reasons given for the threat of an arms embargo and sanctions were the frustration and impatience of the international community with the lack of progress in the implementation of the peace agreement.

In my previous statement to the Council, I reported on the positive efforts and actions that the Government is undertaking in order to address the many challenges that the country is facing, as well as on the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (see S/PV.7840). In addition, on 19 December, His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, further to his launching of a national dialogue, issued a presidential order that formed the National Dialogue Steering Committee, which is composed of varied personalities and will advise the President and the members of the Council on how to embark on the peace process. All of the recent commitments made by my President point in a more encouraging direction. Therefore, I think that the tabling of the draft resolution is unfortunate.

We were hoping that at this critical juncture, when the Transitional Government of National Unity is doing everything to implement Security Council resolutions and the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, the Security Council would engage the Government of South Sudan constructively instead of issuing threats of the imposition of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. It is very unfortunate that individuals who are critical of the peace process were targeted and listed for sanctions by the draft resolution. That action reveals a lack of good faith and only serves to further aggravate matters and invite controversy, potential disagreement and hostility. In truth, harmony and cooperation are naturally what the situation calls for.

As we have repeatedly said, punitive measures may tend to harden positions rather than increase cooperation. We have always argued that an arms embargo seeks to further weaken the Government and strengthen the various militant and armed groups for a number of historical reasons, including the long civil war, which left arms in the hands of civilians, porous borders, which make it difficult to control the illegal in-flow of small arms and light weapons, and, as stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/951), the proliferation of armed groups in the country with their own distinct agendas.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the commitment of my Government to the full implementation of the peace agreement and to working with all stakeholders, including members of the Security Council and the international community, in order to bring peace and stability to the people of South Sudan. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Security Council who engaged with us constructively.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7851

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7851st meeting
Friday, 23 December 2016, 10.45 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. González de Linares Palou	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Coleman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2016/968)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2016/968)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Liberia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1096, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/968, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Against:

None

Abstaining:

France, Russian Federation and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2333 (2016).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the vote.

Ms. Coleman (United States of America): Liberia will soon mark 14 years of peace — the same period of time as the devastating civil wars that inflicted immeasurable suffering on the country's people, ravaged the country's infrastructure and left a generation mired in poverty.

And yet, since that time so much that was destroyed has been rebuilt with the support of the United States, the United Nations and others in the international community, including roads, power generation, electricity grids, schools, hospitals and the social fabric of communities torn apart by war. As Liberia has made this progress, it has taken on more responsibility for functions that were once carried out by the United Nations. On 30 June, Liberia assumed full responsibility for its own security from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

We commend the brave men and women who have served as United Nations peacekeepers and police, as well as the countries from which they come, which played a critically important role in restoring a climate of security that enabled Liberia to emerge from conflict and rebuild. But despite more than a dozen years of peace, Liberia's recovery is unfinished, its institutions are fragile, and corruption and impunity remain all too common. The deadly Ebola outbreak that began in 2014 paralysed the country, taking the lives of nearly 5,000 Liberians and undercutting some of the progress the country had made.

In 2017, Liberians will elect a new leader to succeed President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. As the country's first peaceful and democratic transition of power from one living President to another in seven decades, the election holds the promise of elevating Liberia alongside other models of post-conflict transition in the region that contrast undemocratic trends elsewhere on the continent, where leaders have refused to hold elections, rigged their outcomes or rejected the results when they have lost. We are committed to working with the Liberian Government to ensure a peaceful and secure environment in which the people can participate in free, fair and peaceful elections in October 2017 and through the stable transition to a new Government in January 2018.

This mandate recognizes that the Government of Liberia has risen to the challenge of ensuring security throughout the country since the 30 June transition, and further reduces the size of UNMIL, cutting the military presence by two-thirds and the police presence by half. We expect a further reduction in the civilian presence as well. But it also ensures a continued UNMIL presence

to support the Liberian security services through this historic election in order to consolidate the hard-earned security gains that Liberia has made.

In March 2018, UNMIL will close, but Liberia's ongoing reconciliation and reconstruction efforts will continue, as will its work to strengthen good governance and transparency, improve accountability and meet the basic needs of the Liberian people. That is why peacebuilding efforts must start long before the peacekeeping mission ends. Indeed, such efforts should be well under way already, and they must accelerate immediately.

To that end, resolution 2333 (2016) directs the Secretary-General to prepare a report on a peacebuilding strategy for Liberia that would guide the transition of UNMIL's civilian tasks not only to the Government of Liberia but also to the appropriate United Nations, multilateral and bilateral partners that can bolster the Government's efforts. Liberia's continuing peace, stability and prosperity and all that the Liberian people, Government and the international community have invested in the country depend on getting the transition right. We all have a stake in ensuring that it succeeds.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2333 (2016), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). We believe that it is unacceptable to extend the mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in circumstances where Blue Helmets are anticipating exclusively peacebuilding tasks.

We were surprised by the text in the document concerning the scope of the military and police components of the Mission, which, as we know, will be engaged in promoting elections, reform the security and justice sectors, and broadcast United Nations radio. We do not understand why those purely peaceful tasks require the presence of 700 armed peacekeepers and 5 military helicopters in the country.

We have always been sympathetic to the positions of Governments hosting United Nations peacekeeping missions, but that does not mean that in formulating its decisions, the Council Security should not take into account all factors determining the situation in that country. At the same time, we should not forget that the Secretary-General, in his latest report on Liberia (S/2016/968) clearly states that the security situation remains stable and that the country has not experienced any military threat for several years.

We note the position of the Liberian Government, calling for an extension of the Mission's mandate in its current form for one year. However, we are also forced to note that this would appear to conceal the usual meddling and attempts to assign the United Nations tasks that Monrovia should long since have been able to assume itself. We do not share the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report that the justification for maintaining the presence of the peacekeeping operation in Liberia is a test of the ability of national institutions to maintain stability. In other words, United Nations personnel will be in Liberia just to be on the safe side if the situation should deteriorate in the run-up to the 2017 elections. In so doing, we will divert troops and resources that the United Nations sorely needs in other hot spots.

In that regard, we sincerely regret that the penholders refused to reflect in the draft version an alternative to the mass presence of peacekeepers, whereby the rapid reaction force of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali could have been proactively deployed in the election period. In that connection, we have to reiterate our concerns that working methods of resolution sponsors, which ignored this and other sensible proposals of a number of delegations. We cannot agree with the explanation that the positions of delegations diverged significantly and that there was no possibility to bring them closer together. Such a situation calls for further efforts to develop a compromise, especially as the time left the end of the UNMIL mandate allowed us to do so.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France abstained in the voting on resolution 2333 (2016).

We commend the outstanding progress achieved by Liberia since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003. For the past six months, the Liberian authorities have been fully responsible for maintaining security on their own terrority. In that regard, I hail the leadership and vision demonstrated by President Ellen John Sirleaf. Following a long period of peacekeeping, Liberia has entered the peacebuilding phase. That is why the Security Council today recognized that the situation in Liberia no longer constitutes a threat to international peace and security. We congratulate the Liberian authorities and people yet again on that success.

Yet while the Security Council recognizes that the situation in Liberia no longer threatens international peace and security, it has, sadly, not learned its lesson. In substance, the resolution poses two major problems.

The first is that it maintains Liberia's culture of dependency on the Blue Helmets. By extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for 15 months, the Security Council paradoxically maintains the presence of a military peacekeeping force in that country just as it recognizes that there is no further threat to peace and security there. The Security Council thereby risks preserving a culture of dependency and preventing the development of Liberian national capacities.

France has always stressed that the Security Council should take account of the prospects of the third presidential elections in Liberia since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to be held in October 2017. We recall that it is precisely for that reason that, in June, the Security Council authorized in resolution 2295 (2016) the quick reaction force — which is currently stationed in Côte D'Ivoire and will soon be deployed to Mali — to be deployed temporarily to Liberia if required. The early deployment of the quick reaction force ahead of the autumn elections, as it did successfully in the Central African Republic early this year, would have been a solution well adapted to the needs and circumstances. But that proposal was not heeded. This year, the Council noted with satisfaction the success of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, whose imminent scheduled withdrawal it approved. Liberia is another success story for United Nations peacekeeping, which we believe the Security Council should have recognized.

The second problem with the resolution is that wastes valuable peacekeeping resources. For the past six months, the police and military contingents of UNMIL have had no tasks to carry out. By artificially maintaining more than 700 military and police personnel, as well as numerous United Nations helicopters, in Liberia for the next 15 months, the Security Council will deprive the United Nations of valuable resources to respond to serious crises elsewhere, particularly in Africa. The Security Council is keeping five United Nations helicopters even as the Blue Helmets in Mali, who are deployed in the most deadly peacekeeping operation in the world, are crying out for resources to protect themselves and undertake medical evacuations.

With regard to working methods, we can only regret the absence of genuine negotiations among Council members. Our proposals, as well as those submitted by many of our partners, were barely into account. We consistently offered solutions that would have allowed us to strike a compromise among the various positions. With other States, we introduced solutions that were quite different from our initial positions. In particular, we were open with respect to the timetable and modalities for the UNMIL drawdown, but our proposals were never taken into serious account.

We hope that we shall all find lessons to learn from this episode, and that in the future we are able to strengthen the Council's unity on this key topic.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom abstained in the voting on the final mandate renewal for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) because we do not agree that the mandate put forward for adoption represents the best approach to closing the Mission or for continuing to operate in Liberia over the next 15 months.

The United Kingdom is clear that there is a role for a continued United Nations presence in Liberia, with a focus on peace consolidation and paving the way for an orderly, timely exit. Six months ago, we saw the successful transfer of responsibility for security from UNMIL to the Government of Liberia. That was an important and successful step taken by the Government of Liberia, and it was a step towards the departure of the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

UNMIL has been a success, and a success for United Nations peacekeeping. It demonstrates the real difference that United Nations peacekeepers can make to civilians on the ground. But we must use our peacekeeping resources wisely, where they are really needed. The UNMIL success means that we should not draw out its lifespan unnecessarily. There is no active conflict in Liberia and we do not expect armed groups to reform, so it is not appropriate to include the protection of civilians by UNMIL in the mandate.

We welcome the inclusion of the human rights promotion and protection mandate, with special attention to continuing violations and abuses committed against children and women. There is also more work to be done to strengthen the Government of Liberia's efforts to combat sexual and gender-based crimes, and it is important that this work be handed over smoothly

to the United Nations country team as UNMIL winds down.

The focus now needs to be on peace consolidation and preparation for the departure of UNMIL. We call on UNMIL to use all available resources in its final 15 months to ensure a smooth and orderly close down. In that regard, we are disappointed that $81.6 million of assessed contributions in the special account for UNMIL remain unpaid. That must be addressed in the month ahead.

Mr. Martins (Angola): Angola voted in favour of resolution 2333 (2016), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for more than 12 months, based mainly on our overall evaluation of the very positive role of UNMIL, especially in coming electoral period, and on the concrete request of the Government of Liberia, in solidarity with and understanding of the challenges can be faced during the electoral period and the need for stability. That is why we voted in favour of the resolution.

Angola regrets that the resolution was not adopted unanimously by all Council members, as that would have shown a more resolute and united position of the Council, especially for a mission that can be considered a success story of the Council. I hope that we will continue to engage with UNMIL and the Government, especially in this period of peace consolidation, which is a very critical phase. We do not want to see a return to a situation that has been positively corrected by the Mission while in Liberia.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In recent years, the overall security situation in Liberia has remained stable. Economic development has resumed and the Liberian Government, under the leadership of President Johnson-Sirleaf, has made positive efforts in maintaining stability and economic development. China appreciates the efforts made in that regard and calls on the international community to continue to provide assistance to Liberia. China has always believed that United Nations peacekeeping operations should make adjustments in the light of the actual conditions and developments on the ground until their final exit. In the process, the will of the affected country must be fully respected and consultations with regional countries and regional and subregional organizations strengthened.

Over the years, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has played a significant role in maintaining peace and stability in Liberia. China supports the continued presence of UNMIL in Liberia in an appropriate form. It continues to support Liberia in stabilizing its situation and to assist it in strengthening its capacity-building for the military, police and security sectors so as to ensure the smooth process of general elections and preserve the hard-earned peace dividends. Given those considerations, China voted in favour of resolution 2333 (2016). China will work with the international community and continue to play a positive and constructive role in promoting peace, stability and development in Liberia.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay voted in favour of resolution 2333 (2016), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), as we feel it fitting and sensible to proceed to a reduction of the military and police component, striking a balance between the situation on the ground and the request of the country concerned, Liberia. Besides the reduction of military and police forces, we have retained a component that will monitor human rights in the country, which we welcome.

Nonetheless, Uruguay again notes the lack of commitment and constructive spirit in the evolution of negotiations on the text. During the briefing and the consultations that took place on 12 December, major differences emerged in the positions of members with respect to the future of the United Nations presence in Liberia after December. In that respect, Uruguay believes that the best way to overcome differences is through negotiations and constructive dialogue in the search for shared positions acceptable to all Council members.

As we stated when we renewed the mandate for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan a few days ago (see S/PV.7840), the Security Council must show that it is able to adopt resolutions that achieve the broadest possible support among its members. The role of penholder is crucial in such negotiating situations, and it is desirable that penholders demonstrate more flexibility and be more receptive to proposals from other Council members.

The international community is addressing a large number of crises, and the Council has already revealed differences and weaknesses in its actions in many. As there are shared positions on the fundamental approach to addressing the crisis in Liberia, we believe it is unnecessary to add such divisions to the matter at hand. We trust that procedures will improve in 2017.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): New Zealand voted in favour of resolution 2333 (2016). This is a critical period for Liberia. The Council's consideration of the future United Nations presence in the country was important, given the considerable gains that Liberia has achieved in recent years, including taking over full responsibility for security from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) earlier this year. Today's resolution rightfy commends the successful completion of that process.

After 13 years of UNMIL support in the country, it was right for the Council to consider the next steps for the United Nations engagement in the country and to carefully consider the best interests of Liberia itself. New Zealand saw considerable merit in arguments made in favour of the United Nations providing support to Liberia through 2017, including the elections period, but to bring to an end the current peacekeeping mission. The current resolution extends the mandate of the Mission for a final period until 30 March 2018.

New Zealand considers it important that the Security Council convey two key messages. First, the United Nations should continue to support Liberia in a strong partnership as it enters the next phase in its history. Secondly, UNMIL will rightly withdraw in early 2018, given that the Liberians have demonstrated that a United Nations peacekeeping mission in the country will no longer be warranted in the light of the significant progress made.

We would echo the concerns expressed about the process followed in negotiating the resolution. We feel that more could have been done to bridge the diverging views within the Council in order to reach consensus and thereby send a united message to Liberia.

Finally, we again commend Liberia for the progress made in the country. We wish it continued success in the important period ahead.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make an explanation of vote in my national capacity.

Liberia is a success story on the Council's agenda. It started as an extremely complex situation and, thanks to the joint efforts of all Liberian society and the leadership of President Johnson-Sirleaf, we are entering an electoral year with very good prospects for stability and a peaceful transition of power.

The international community has made significant efforts to support the peacebuilding process, and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is the embodiment of such efforts. Resolution 2333 (2016) extends the final United Nations presence in the country to affirm and end a process that is firmly headed towards success, although there are some aspects that still require attention, such as the appropriate maintenance of the human rights component.

We voted in favour of resolution 2333 (2016) because we are convinced that peace missions are not designed to go on indefinitely and in the understanding that this renewal of the UNMIL mandate is and must be the final one.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Liberia.

Mr. Sulunteh (Liberia): When last we were honoured with the opportunity to intervene in the Council (see S/PV.7824), we put before those present the concerns of our Government and people. Today we will not bore the members of the Council with a repetition of those concerns. What we want to do today is to thank everyone — those that voted in favour of resolution 2333 (2016) as well as those that abstained.

We note all of the concerns that have been expressed here, but we also recognize that the action we have taken today on behalf of Liberia will go a long way towards consolidating the gains we have already made. For us, that signals that the Security Council continues to demonstrate a willingness not just to punish wrongdoing, but to reward success and the actions of countries emerging from conflict that are determined to do the right thing by themselves and with the international community.

Thus, on behalf of a grateful nation and a grateful Government, we look forward to the continued engagement of this Council and to working with the United Nations Mission in Liberia over the course of the coming year and to bringing that mission to an end, as we promised, in one year.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7852

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7852nd meeting

Friday, 23 December 2016, 11.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Coleman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/1057)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-46234 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/1057)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Responsive Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council Members to document S/2016/1057, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015).

I now give the floor to Mr. Ging.

Mr. Ging: I am providing this update to the Security Council today on behalf of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien.

As we meet today, the evacuation of the eastern districts of Aleppo may have concluded, but the situation in Syria remains catastrophic. Some 13.5 million people within Syria are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including nearly 9 million who are food insecure.

This year has been marked by horrific suffering and the loss of so many lives in a conflict characterized by ever increasing inhumanity against the civilian population. Attacks on civilian infrastructure — including schools, medical facilities, settlements for the internally displaced and public markets — have destroyed institutions otherwise relied upon by Syrians for food, shelter, education and medical care. At least 126 attacks have been recorded against medical facilities this year, more than 770 medical personnel have been killed during the conflict and one in four schools has ceased to function, with some 2 million children out of school. Despite calls for an end to besiegement as a tactic of war, we end 2016 with hundreds of thousands of Syrian civilians — 700,000 to be precise — still trapped in besieged locations, while humanitarians continue to struggle to gain access for aid delivery.

The conflict in Syria has recently been most devastating in Aleppo, where the near-complete destruction of large parts of the city has subjected its civilian population to unspeakable horror. The United Nations welcomed the adoption of resolution 2328 (2016) earlier this week, in the hope that it would finally ensure that civilians in Aleppo were afforded all necessary protection and assistance. The United Nations role in Aleppo and in supporting the evacuation of the city has four main elements: to observe the evacuation itself, support the evacuees once they have left, seek access to the retaken areas of eastern Aleppo in order to provide assistance in those remaining in those areas, and continue with the ongoing humanitarian operations to support those across the remainder of the city.

The operation to evacuate people from the eastern districts of Aleppo drew to a close late last night. Overall, more than 35,000 people were evacuated, including some 20,000 people since the adoption of resolution 2328 (2016). Those evacuated included civilians and fighters and their families. Some 734 people were medically evacuated by ambulances, according to the World Health Organization.

To achieve this, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) were in the lead, working to ensure people wanting to leave could do so. Overall, 308 buses, 61 ambulances and 1,231 private vehicles were used in the evacuation, crossing numerous checkpoints from besieged eastern Aleppo through the western part of the city and into western rural Aleppo and onwards to Idlib. In parallel, an estimated 1,300 people were evacuated from the besieged villages of Fo'ah and Kafraya, in Idlib.

Due to lack of approval by the Government of Syria, the United Nations team did not have access to eastern Aleppo in recent months, but since 15 December undertook a monitoring and observation function there. It was stationed around the clock close to the Ramouseh checkpoint in the Government-controlled part of Aleppo. Additional United Nations staff were sent from Damascus in support. In accordance with resolution 2328 (2016), the United Nations team observed the evacuation of buses and ambulances and, to the extent

possible, monitored whether anyone was forcibly disembarked, detained or otherwise mistreated as they crossed through the checkpoint area.

The ICRC and SARC teams were present directly at the evacuation point and accompanied the convoys as they crossed each of the checkpoints. Further, humanitarian organizations were present on the non-State armed group side to receive those evacuated to ensure they received essential assistance. The evacuation operation was an extremely complex undertaking and was punctuated by frustrating stops and starts due to negotiations between the relevant parties, which were setting the terms and conditions for the evacuations, including insisting on synchronizing evacuations from eastern Aleppo and from besieged Fo'ah and Kafraya.

Once evacuated from the besieged area, civilians had the option to go where they wished. The overwhelming majority went to non-State armed-group areas. Two reception centres, in Al-Atarib, in Aleppo, and Sarmada, in Idlib, were set up to receive those evacuated, and information centres in Orem Al-Kubra and Kafr Naha continue to provide basic services and details about additional humanitarian support. While the majority opted initially to go to reception sites, many have subsequently moved on to be hosted by family and friends.

Humanitarian organizations have recorded the arrival of 23,615 people to the reception centres and to more than 60 villages. Approximately a thousand people were reported to have arrived in the camps along the Turkish border. Meanwhile a small number of those evacuated also chose to go to Government areas in western Aleppo city. Those evacuated from Fo'ah and Kefraya were initially moved to internally-displaced-person reception centres in Aleppo city; while some have stayed in Aleppo, others have moved on to sites prepared by the Government in Tartous, Homs and Latakia. The United Nations teams in Homs and Tartous have been providing humanitarian support.

Humanitarian needs among the evacuees arriving in reception centres have been acute. The evacuees are a displaced population that has endured months with little access to food, medical care or other essential items. Many of them have been physically and psychologically traumatized by the deprivation and bombardment that they have endured. Children are particularly badly affected. Families have been separated throughout the evacuation movement, and there have been reports of at least 75 children being separated from their families or otherwise unaccompanied upon their departure from eastern Aleppo. Multiple cases of moderate and severe malnutrition have also been reported.

The evacuation process itself was difficult and many times dangerous. A number of security incidents were reported during the evacuations. The United Nations received credible reports of non-Syrian allied forces in western Aleppo stopping a bus of 800 people on 16 December, detaining and beating 10 people and reportedly killing one person. Further, 20 buses were reportedly attacked and burned on 18 December by a non-State armed group while en route to the evacuation site. Other protection issues were reported, including people stranded in buses in harsh security and weather conditions, prevention of evacuations of some civilians by non-State armed groups, sporadic cases of detention of people at checkpoints, and ill-treatment and harassment of some people as they were being evacuated.

The United Nations and its partners mobilized a comprehensive response to make sure that evacuees have basic essentials. Over 30 partner non-governmental organizations are on the ground in Idlib. Evacuees at the reception areas are provided basic services to meet immediate needs, including food, winterized shelter and non-food items, and hygiene and sanitation products. Medical and psychosocial services are also available. Health partners are serving the reception centres and neighbouring villages through 22 mobile clinics. Specialized services are also available for individuals with specific needs, including women and girls, and children separated from their families or otherwise unaccompanied. Some 95 serious medical cases have been transferred to Turkey. The humanitarian teams on the ground will continue to scale up the response, as necessary, to ensure urgent and life-saving needs are met.

I would like to update and notify the Council of the arrangements undertaken pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2328 (2016). While supporting the evacuation process was our immediate priority, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria has also submitted a formal written request to the Government of Syria seeking a blanket travel authorization to Aleppo for all United Nations senior staff in country and humanitarian access to parts of Aleppo retaken by the Government yesterday.

There are currently 105 United Nations staff members in Aleppo. Of these, 34 have been fully dedicated to monitoring evacuations from eastern Aleppo within the framework of resolution 2328 (2016), while the remaining staff have been carrying out their humanitarian response duties throughout the rest of the city. As part of the ongoing surge support to Aleppo, the United Nations is also requesting agreement from the Government of Syria to surge up to a hundred additional staff, including 30 international staff, to strengthen monitoring and response in eastern Aleppo.

Under the auspices of resolution 2328 (2016), we are ready to implement a plan for all districts of eastern Aleppo in the coming days, as soon as we receive agreement from the Syrian Government to deploy. To date, the United Nations and its partners have been able to access nearly all formerly besieged neighbourhoods of eastern Aleppo except those retaken by the Government of Syria as of yesterday. A team of 16 United Nations staff, along with four armoured vehicles, are on standby to deploy to these last inaccessible areas, as soon as Government permission is granted.

For all areas formerly besieged, in the first phase, assessments will be conducted of the number of civilians in these areas, their needs and the status of civilian infrastructure, including housing, food, medical care and other essential services. Medical teams are on standby to evacuate all remaining critical medical cases, and life-saving items are available for those in urgent need.

In the second phase, the United Nations and partners will launch a comprehensive multisectoral response, in conjunction with partners and other relevant institutions, as well as the deployment of additional surge staff as needed. This comprehensive response will include emergency assistance to residents, including shelter rehabilitation, solid waste and debris removal, livelihood support and, as soon as possible, rehabilitation of basic services. Throughout, United Nations teams would be on the ground in the neighbourhoods as much as possible to monitor and observe the situation and ensure the well-being of civilians, but all of this is subject to the consent of and coordination with the Syrian Government, which is pending.

I take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to the heroic staff of the ICRC and the SARC, and the non-governmental organizations and United Nations colleagues working diligently on providing a life-saving response. To all who have been on the frontline of this evacuation operation, we salute their courage, persistence and sacrifice. They inspire us with their basic humanity, which we should all share.

I turn now to areas outside of Aleppo, where the humanitarian situation is dreadful. In neighbouring Idlib governorate, the towns of Fo'ah and Kafraya remain besieged by non-State armed opposition groups that otherwise control the vast majority of the territory. As part of the agreement reached about the evacuation of Aleppo, evacuations in those towns are scheduled to resume on a tit-for-tat basis with Madaya and Zabadani in the coming days. As we have seen with the attack on the buses going to Fo'ah earlier last week, protection concerns are very high for the residents of the enclave.

There are also broader concerns that the civilian population in Idlib is at risk of suffering the same fate as those in Aleppo if it becomes the focus of a new and more intense offensive. Of the currently estimated population of approximately 2 million people, 700,000 of whom are internally displaced persons, including 35,000 from eastern Aleppo this month, the United Nations and it partners currently access vulnerable communities through its cross-border work out of Gaziantep and support approximately 700,000 people each month with food, and some 340,000 with medical treatments. Some 230,000 are provided with water and sanitation assistance each month.

In Al-Wa'er, a besieged neighbourhood on the outskirts of Homs city, the situation also remains of critical concern. Immediate humanitarian intervention is required to prevent the besieged neighbourhood, which hosts an estimated 50,000 civilians, from facing acute shortages of basic and lifesaving items. There is a collapse already of the limited medical services. Food stocks are running out as we speak and, since 26 November, medical evacuations have reportedly not been permitted. Two critical cases identified by the United Nations, one involving a pregnant woman, are in need of urgent evacuation.

We also continue to follow with concern the anti-Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) operations occurring around Al-Bab and Raqqa. The reported intensification of fighting from 8 December around ISIL-controlled Al-Bab town, including through airstrikes, is expected to result in further displacement. Preparations are ongoing in the surrounding areas to

receive potential internally displaced persons from the town, while United Nations partners continue to support the 10,000 internally displaced persons displaced by earlier fighting. In Raqqa the primary concern is the lack of humanitarian access and protection services. Reports indicate that people are in need of health services and food. In that regard, United Nations access to Hasakeh is a major concern, depending on a costly air bridge from Damascus.

ISIL advances in Palmyra and nearby areas in eastern Homs are also of major concern, resulting in the displacement of thousands of people to Homs city and surrounding areas. We again commend SARC and other partners for providing assistance to those displaced in such difficult circumstances.

I am pleased to report that there has been some improvement of the situation at the berm along the Syrian-Jordanian border. On 22 November, the United Nations and its partners resumed lifesaving humanitarian assistance at the berm through a newly constructed distribution point negotiated in September. The latest figures for the distribution of food and non-food items are 8,404 households compromising 31,094 individuals in Rukban. In addition, distributions started in Hadalat, and a new service facility, including a health clinic has been completed, enabling the delivery of health assistance. The water infrastructure is projected to be completed by January 2017.

As has been noted in the Council in the past, the United Nations and its partners reach some 6 million people in need every month through all modalities available. Cross-line inter-agency operations to besieged, hard-to-reach and other priority locations are a particularly vital lifeline for civilians in those vulnerable communities. Nearly 1.3 million people have been reached this year in those locations multiple times.

Although we continue to operate in an environment of acute humanitarian need, we are hindered by persistent obstacles in delivering much-needed assistance. For cross-line inter-agency convoys, ongoing insecurity in many areas and administrative delays on the part of Syrian Government in the approval of facilitation letters and convoy plans continue to hamper our efforts. What was reduced to a two-step approval process earlier this year has gone back again to being a 10-step process. We have secured agreement from the Syrian Government for only one cross-line convoy so far this month, reaching 6,000 people. That is despite receiving initial approvals to reach almost 800,000 people in December. We need timely approvals and simplified approval procedures. We have immediate capacity to deliver to 300,000 people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas per week, should we be given the access by the parties to the conflict.

We end 2016 at a place where humanitarian and protection needs are as acute and severe as they have ever been amid continued fighting across the country. Despite all the challenges, the United Nations, the ICRC, SARC and our other key humanitarian partners, though their heroic staff on the ground, continue to try to reach every Syrian in need. However, collectively we are falling unforgivably short in our responsibility at the global level to support them. I therefore call upon all Members of the Council and all parties to the conflict and their allies to redouble their efforts to end this conflict and in the meantime provide more effective support to humanitarian action for the innocent victims of this conflict.

As has been stated so many times, there is no humanitarian solution to this crisis. We welcome the announcement by United Nations Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura on the resumption of political talks in February. As the number of those dying, becoming displaced and suffering continues to rise, as we end 2016 a new political commitment to peace will be needed if 2017 is to offer any different prospect than the death and destruction of the past five years.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of all the members of the Security Council, I should like to thank Mr. Ging for his comprehensive briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make a statements.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I thank Mr. Ging and his team for his briefing.

As this is New Zealand's last opportunity to address the humanitarian situation in Syria, we wanted to make a few remarks in the open Chamber.

Over the past two years, New Zealand has worked with the Security Council to try to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria. We were honoured to work with our co-leads Jordan and Spain last year, and with Egypt and Spain this year. We secured some modest achievements, most notably the two annual renewals of the humanitarian access resolutions first pioneered by Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg.

In Council terms, those resolutions and resolution 2286 (2016), on attacks on healthcare facilities and workers, were important achievements, especially when viewed against a background of near paralysis in the Council on the political track on Syria. However, in terms of real-world impacts, what has been achieved under those resolutions is a tiny fraction of what has been needed to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

During our term we witnessed some deeply disturbing trends: systematic attacks on hospitals and on medical and humanitarian workers; obstruction of food and essential supplies to civilian populations as a tactic of war; use of indiscriminate weapons with zero regard for civilians; and use of chemicals as weapons. These tactics of war undermine the basic tenets of international humanitarian law and should concern us all.

The need to address Syria's humanitarian crisis should be something on which all Council members can agree; and for, the most part, that has been the case. However, as we saw graphically last month, when humanitarian objectives do not square with the war-fighting aims of those with decision-making powers on the Council, the humanitarian objectives are the ones that are pushed aside, which is not how international humanitarian law is supposed to work.

Last month's vetoes of the simple draft resolution that New Zealand put forward with Egypt and Spain was but the latest example of an attitude that has troubled New Zealand deeply during our time on the Council: that is, the apparent indifference of a number of Council members to human suffering, even on a large scale. While that has been most apparent in the case of Syria, in connection with which a series of vetoes has been cast over the past five years, it is equally apparent in the Council's actions and its inability to take effective action with respect to the crises in Yemen, South Sudan and the Sudan.

We welcome the recent adoption of the resolutions allowing the United Nations to observe evacuations in Aleppo and the renewal of cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access. The Council's priority must be to address persistent efforts by the Syrian Government to prevent the full and effective implementation of those resolutions, which we have witnessed with depressing regularity over the past two years. As Mr. Ging has reminded us, we must now ensure the protection of the civilians fleeing eastern Aleppo, Fo'ah and Kefraya. In the longer term, we must ensure that the protection of civilians is prioritized throughout Syria and in the many other towns and communities that remain besieged or undergoing bombardment.

We welcome the determination others have shown in recent weeks to act when the Council will not. We hope that the resolution adopted in the General Assembly this week can lay the ground work for action to bring justice for the victims of this conflict. We also welcome the board of inquiry findings on the attack on the United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy in Orem Al-Kubra. The information that the attack was highly likely perpetrated by the Syrian air force is deeply disturbing, as was the obstruction and delay by the Syrian Government in issuing visas to the investigators. We hope that the Council will be able to unite in welcoming that report and in condemning all attacks on humanitarian workers.

We pay tribute to the dedication and commitment of many, including United Nations Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, to achieve peace in Syria, to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and to Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien and Mr. Ging and their teams for their unwavering dedication and efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need and to the courage and sacrifice of humanitarian agencies and workers in Syria and to the generosity of neighbouring countries in sheltering the millions of Syrian refugees. We also thank our fellow humanitarian co-leads over the past two years — Spain, Egypt and Jordan — for their generous collaboration and their determination to help improve the humanitarian situation in Syria.

While the provision of humanitarian assistance is vital, it is only treating the symptoms of the conflict. External actors must set aside vested interests and narrow allegiances and prioritize action to end the conflict and promote genuine reconciliation. As we all know, only a political resolution with meaningful reconciliation and genuine political and security sector reform can provide a lasting peace to the civilians of Syria.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I understand that this is the final statement of my colleague from New Zealand in the Security Council, and I do not want to spoil his swan song. However just for protocol, just for the record, we do not agree with a number of the arguments he put forth. What is particularly unacceptable is the conflation he

made between the veto and his comment that someone is pursuing military goals without thinking about humanitarian consequences. If he is hinting at Russia, that is not the case.

We have just heard about a very complex operation in Aleppo to evacuate civilians, so I want to assure the representative of New Zealand that humanitarian consequences are of extreme concern to us when it comes to any planning in Syria.

Another even more important problem that the representative of New Zealand did not mention is the fact that terror organizations are used to achieve foreign policy objectives. That is the real problem that, again and again, the Security Council needs to be address.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7853

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7853rd meeting
Friday, 23 December 2016, 2 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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16-46301 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 2.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1100, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela .

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council wishing to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting at such short notice. Malaysia, together with New Zealand, Senegal and Venezuela as sponsors of draft resolution S/2016/1100, on the issue of illegal Israeli settlements, have called for this meeting to put the draft to a vote. As representatives of various regional groupings at the United Nations — the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Group of Western European and other States, the Group of African States and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States — we are bound by similar aims and a sense of responsibility to take effective action on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially on the issue of settlements.

In numerous Council meetings on Palestine, and at the Arria Formula meeting on settlements in October, we listened to the repeated calls of Council members, the Secretary-General, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and representatives of civil society and other United Nations Member States for urgent Council action to halt settlement activities and reverse the negative trends that are threatening peace and the viability of the two-State solution. The latest, unprecedented attempt of the Israeli Parliament to legalize outposts on private Palestinian lands added further urgency to the need for the Council to send a clear signal on the issue of settlements. Malaysia acknowledges the efforts made by Egypt and the Arab League to engage in consultations with Council members over the past two months on this issue. We fully support their efforts, and we share their aim for Council action. We have also observed an emerging consensus among Council members on the issue of settlements. We thus believe that it is urgent for the Council to seize the opportunity for effective Council action without any further delay.

The draft resolution being put to the vote today (S/2016/1100) calls for the cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and for affirmative steps to reverse the negative trends on the ground that are endangering the two-State solution. It also calls for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, and calls for accountability. The text further urges all parties to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and to end Israeli occupation.

On the implementation of the draft resolution, the text is requesting the Secretary-General to report the Council every three months.

We realize that some Council members may have legitimate concerns as to the short period of time in which the draft was officially circulated, put into blue and submitted for adoption. In normal and ideal circumstances, we, too, would have preferred a more transparent and inclusive process. However, we realize that this is anything but a normal situation and that we need to tread carefully in view of the sensitivity of the issue.

Exceptional circumstances require bold action and exceptional measures. Ultimately, our aim is to bridge the gap in the respective positions of Council members in order to reach a consensus. The last time the Council adopted a resolution on settlements was more than 36 years ago. Since then, the situation on the ground has worsened to the point where the very prospect of a two-State solution is now in question. There is no doubt that this falls under the responsibility of the Security

Council under the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We thus appeal to all Council members not to lose this opportunity for peace and to exercise our legal, political and moral responsibility to vote in support of the draft resolution, which is based on previous Council resolutions and the values and principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and international standards of human rights. The time for action is now, to prove our long-held commitment and to reinforce the fact that the two-State solution is not merely an empty slogan.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand has made no secret of its frustration that it has been almost eight years since the Security Council adopted a resolution on the Middle East peace process. New Zealand has worked hard over the past two years to try to advance a resolution on this issue, which we consider to be one of the most pressing unaddressed issues on the Council's agenda.

New Zealand has floated its own ideas for a more comprehensive draft than the one that is before us today (S/2016/1100), and we are grateful for the willingness of other Council members to engage with us on the text. It became apparent to us, however, that the balance of the Council wished to focus on the more pressing issue of the settlements, which, as my colleague from Malaysia has said, is threatening the viability of the two-State solution. This message was very clearly delivered to us in the last Quartet report and in regular reports of the Secretary-General.

For these reasons, we supported the text circulated on Wednesday and joined the group calling for a vote on that text today, in order to ensure that the Council had a chance to consider it.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important vote on a draft resolution (S/2016/1100) that well may well be historic as a contribution to peace. Our country, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, together with Malaysia, New Zealand and Senegal, decided to co-sponsor and call for a vote on this draft resolution on the peace process in the Middle East, especially on the issue of the illegal Israeli settlements.

The decision to present this draft resolution to the Council responds to the pressing, urgent need for this body to speak out on the worrying situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the continued illegal expansion of Israeli settlements, which today represent the most serious threat to the possibility of the political solution of two States.

When we submitted this proposal, we were motivated by the firm commitment to reverse this dangerous trend in order to safeguard the interests of the Palestinian people and the viability of their State and to revitalize the peace process, which has been at a standstill for more than 20 years. It is high time for the Security Council to shoulder the great responsibility it has in the origin and the continuation of this conflict.

I believe that the draft resolution is a balanced text that reaffirms the right of both countries to coexist peacefully within the internationally secure pre-1967 borders, pursuant to resolution 242 (1967) and the norms of international law, and bearing in mind the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 (see A/ES-10/273).

At the same time, this proposal objectively addresses with the problem of settlements and their destabilizing effects on the region, and condemns the violence against the civilian population, no matter who the perpetrators might be and regardless of their motives.

Venezuela acknowledges the efforts made by the Council to hold this meeting, especially on the part of those countries that have called an for open, transparent and frank discussion in this body and for action by the Council that would revitalize the peace process, as well as the countries that have presented initiatives aimed at emerging from the stalemate.

Special mention must be made of the tireless efforts of Egypt and the support of the Arab League in achieving effective progress in dealing with the Palestinian question. We also wish to thank and acknowledge the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for its continued availability to facilitate the holding of this meeting, and New Zealand, for having been the driving force that enabled this draft resolution to be submitted before the end of the year.

The proposing countries represent diverse regions of the world. We felt encouraged because of the emerging consensus on the issue of settlements. All member countries recognize that illegal settlements are an obstacle to the peace process and a threat to the two-State solution. Our actions are also a response

to the many calls of the members of the Council, the Secretary-General himself, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the Quartet, other member States and prominent stakeholders, in the framework of overcoming the obstacles facing the Palestine–Israel peace process.

We are on the threshold of a historic decision, which could represent the beginning of a new phase in the peace process after almost four decades of failed attempts. That is why the Council, as a representative of the international community and the guarantor of international peace and security, must act in a spirit of unity, approving the text submitted today.

Today the world has its eyes on the Security Council. It has placed its hopes in its members working for peace, aware that history will judge our actions with gratitude if we can contribute, even in a small way, to relaunch a political process. We are opening the path for new generations of Israelis and Palestinians to have the opportunity to build a peaceful world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Against:
None

Abstaining:
United States

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2334 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 and the wait for the Palestinian people to exercise their right to an independent sovereign State and a natural life of dignity and freedom, despite the resounding silence of the international community and dozens of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions that continue to be unimplemented, Egypt has shouldered its responsibilities and confronted many challenges. We have gone through many military and diplomatic wars to defend Palestinian rights in the move towards creating an independent Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem and taken steps towards achieving a just and lasting peace settlement in the Middle East.

Resolution 2334 (2016) on Israeli settlements, which was adopted today, undoubtedly expresses the painful reality of illegitimate settlements. It is also born from the policy of the confiscation of Palestinian land that runs contrary to the unambiguous principle adopted by the international community concerning the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by armed force. That requires all of us to be wise and politically realistic in taking up this issue without excessive action on the part of any party, precisely as we witnessed during our deliberations on this resolution.

I am referring specifically to the issue of settlements, which is related to one of the most important components of the final peace settlement — borders. Consultations on the resolution and the timing of the vote over the past several hours have demonstrated that some international parties want to intervene directly in order to resolve the question of Palestine once and for all in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 446 (1979). Any opportunity to take future steps can in no way allow us to avoid the fundamental requirements of a settlement to the question of Palestine including the issue of settlements. Those pillars are well known and have been set out in previous Security Council resolutions and the positions adopted by international Powers and the Palestinian leadership.

Egypt felt compelled to withdraw its own draft resolution. That was a procedural action because of the pressures that the draft resolution encountered since it had been put into blue. That led to a warning from some members of the Security Council. That is utterly unacceptable in form and substance in view of Egypt's firm positions, about which there can be no doubt, pertaining to the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. Let it also be known that those pressures were exerted in Egypt's absence through 24/7 active political efforts since the draft resolution's inception.

In order to maintain the legitimate Palestinian rights through a just and lasting settlement in accordance with relevant international resolutions, we acted accordingly.

Nevertheless, Egypt voted in favour of resolution 2334 (2016), based on our firm, principled and unequivocal positions. It should not be subject to negotiations or pressure from anyone. We were the first to bear arms to protect legitimate Arab and Palestinian rights. We were the first to make peace with Israel as we believe in peace rather than armed conflict. Egypt has been and continues to be one of the strongest believers in just and durable peace in the Middle East based on the principles of a two-State solution and land for peace, as has been internationally acknowledged.

Ms. Power (United States): Let me begin with a quote,

> "The United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transitional period. Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlements freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks. Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of the Arabs that a final outcome can be free and fairly negotiated."

This was said in 1982 by President Ronald Reagan. He was speaking about a new proposal that he was launching to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While ultimately, of course, President Reagan's proposal was not realized, his words are still illuminating in at least two respects.

First, it is because they underscore the United States' deep and long-standing commitment to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That has been the policy of every Administration, Republican and Democrat, since before President Reagan to the present day. Secondly, it because President Reagan's words highlight the United States' long-standing position that Israeli settlement activity in territories occupied in 1967 undermines Israel's security, harms the viability of a negotiated two-State outcome and erodes prospects for peace and stability in the region.

Today the Security Council reaffirmed its established consensus that settlements have no legal validity. The United States has been sending the message that the settlements must stop privately and publicly for nearly five decades through the Administrations of Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and currently Barak Obama. Indeed, since 1967, the only President who had not had at least one Israeli-Palestinian-related resolution adopted during his tenure is Barak Obama. Our vote today, therefore, is fully in line with the bipartisan history of how American Presidents have approached both the issue and the role of this body.

Given the consistency of this position across United States Administrations, one would think that it would be a routine vote for the United States to allow the passage of a resolution with the elements in resolution 2334 (2016), thereby reaffirming the long-standing position of the United States on settlements, condemning violence and incitement and calling for the parties to start taking constructive steps to reverse current trends on the ground. These are familiar, well-articulated components of United States policy.

But in reality this vote was not straightforward for us because of where it is taking place — at the United Nations. For the simple truth is that for as long as Israel has been a member of this institution, it has been treated differently from other nations at the United Nations. That has been true not only in decades past, such as the infamous resolution that the General Assembly adopted in 1975 with the support of the majority of member States, officially determining that Zionism was a form of racism, but also in 2016, this year. One need only look at the 18 resolutions against Israel adopted during the General Assembly in September or the 12 Israel-specific resolutions adopted this year in the Human Rights Council — more than those focused on Syria, North Korea, Iran and South Sudan put together — to see that in 2016 Israel continues to be treated differently from other Member States.

Like United States Administrations before it, the Obama Administration has worked tirelessly to fight for Israel's right simply to be treated just like any other country — from advocating for Israel to finally be granted membership to a United Nations regional body, something no other United Nations Member State has been denied: to fighting to ensure that Israeli non-governmental organizations are not denied United Nations accreditation, simply because they are Israeli; to getting Yom Kippur finally recognized as a United Nations holiday; to pressing the Council to break its indefensible silence in response to terrorist attacks on Israelis. As the United States has said repeatedly, such unequal treatment not only hurts Israel, it undermines the legitimacy of the United Nations itself. The practice

of treating Israel differently at the United Nations matters for votes like this one, for even if one believes that today's resolution is justified or even more, necessitated, by events on the ground, one cannot completely separate the vote from the venue.

Member States that say that they are for the two-State solution must ask themselves some difficult questions. For those States that are quick to promote resolutions condemning Israel but refuse to recognize when innocent Israelis are the victims of terrorism, what steps will they take to stop treating Israel differently? For those States that passionately denounce the closures of crossings in Gaza as exacerbating the humanitarian situation but say nothing of the resources diverted from helping Gaza's residents to dig tunnels into Israeli territory, so that terrorists can attack Israelis in their homes, what will they do to end the double standard that undermines the legitimacy of this institution?

Member States should also ask themselves about the double standards when it comes to the Council taking action. Just this morning, we came together as a Council and we were unable to muster the will to act to stop the flow weapons going to killers in South Sudan who are perpetrating mass atrocities that the United Nations has said could lead to genocide. We could not come together even to curb the flow of arms. Earlier this month, the Council could not muster the will to adopt the simplest of resolutions, calling for a seven-day pause in the savage bombardment of innocent civilians, hospitals and schools in Aleppo, yet when a resolution on Israel comes before the Council, members suddenly summon the will to act.

It is because this foru too often continues to be biased against Israel, because there are important issues that are not sufficiently addressed in the resolution and because the United States does not agree with every word in this text that the United States did not vote in favour of the resolution. But it is because the resolution reflects the facts on the ground and is consistent with United States policy across Republican and Democratic administrations throughout the history of the State of Israel that the United States did not veto it.

The United States has consistently said that it would block any resolution that it thought would undermine Israel's security or would seek to impose a resolution to the conflict. We would not have let the resolution pass had it not addressed counterproductive actions by the Palestinians, such as terrorism and incitement to violence, which we have repeatedly condemned and raised with the Palestinian leadership — and which of course must be stopped.

Unlike some on the Security Council, we do not believe that outside parties can impose a solution that has not been negotiated by the two parties, nor can we unilaterally recognize a future Palestinian State. But it is precisely our commitment to Israel's security that makes the United States believe that we cannot stand in the way of the resolution as we seek to preserve a chance of attaining our long-standing objective — two States living side by side, in peace and security. Let me briefly explain why.

The settlement problem has gotten so much worse that it is now putting at risk the very viability of that two-State solution. The number of settlers in the roughly 150 authorized Israeli settlements east of the 1967 lines has increased dramatically. Since the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accords — which launched efforts that made a comprehensive and lasting peace possible — the number of settlers has increased by 355,000. The total settler population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem now exceeds 590,000. Nearly 90,000 settlers are living east of the separation barrier that was created by Israel itself. And just since July 2016 — when the Middle East Quartet issued a report highlighting international concern about a systematic process of land seizures, settlement expansions, and legalizations — Israel has advanced plans for more than 2,600 new settlement units. Yet rather than dismantling those and other settler outposts, which are illegal even under Israeli law, now there is new legislation advancing in the Israeli Knesset that would legalize most of the outposts — a factor that propelled the decision of the resolution's sponsors to bring it before the Council.

The Israeli Prime Minister recently described his Government as "more committed to settlements than any in Israel's history", and one of his leading coalition partners recently declared that "the era of the two-State solution is over". At the same time, the Prime Minister has said that he is still committed to pursuing a two-State solution. But those statements are irreconcilable. One cannot simultaneously champion expanding Israeli settlements and champion a viable two-State solution that would end the conflict. One has to make a choice between settlements and separation.

In 2011, the United States vetoed a draft resolution that focused exclusively on settlements, as if settlements

were the only factor harming the prospects of a two-State solution. The circumstances have changed dramatically. Since 2011, settlement growth has only accelerated. Since 2011, multiple efforts to pursue peace through negotiations have failed. And since 2011, President Obama and Secretary Kerry have repeatedly warned — publicly and privately — that the absence of progress towards peace and continued settlement expansion were going to put the two-State solution at risk and threaten Israel's stated objective to remain both a Jewish State and a democracy. Moreover, unlike in 2011, today's resolution condemns violence, terrorism and incitement, which also pose extremely grave risks to the two-State solution. Today's resolution reflects trends that will permanently destroy the hope of a two-State solution if they continue on their current course.

The United States has not taken the step of voting in support of the resolution because it is too narrowly focused on settlements, when we all know — or should know — that many other factors contribute significantly to the tensions that perpetuate the conflict. Let us be clear. Even if every single settlement were to be dismantled tomorrow, peace still would not be attainable without both sides acknowledging uncomfortable truths and making difficult choices. That is an indisputable fact. Yet, it is one that is too often overlooked by members of the United Nations and by members of the Council.

For Palestinian leaders, that means recognizing the obvious fact that in addition to taking innocent lives, the incitement to violence, the glorification of terrorists and the growth of violent extremism erode prospects for peace, as the resolution makes crystal clear. The most recent wave of Palestinian violence has seen terrorists commit hundreds of attacks, including driving cars into crowds of innocent civilians and stabbing mothers in front of their children. Yet rather than condemn those attacks, Hamas, other radical factions and even certain members of Fatah have held up the terrorists as heroes and used social media to incite others to follow in their murderous footsteps. And while President Abbas and his party's leaders have made clear their opposition to violence, terrorism and extremism, they have too often failed to condemn specific attacks or condemn the praise heaped upon the perpetrators.

Our vote today does not in any way diminish the United States' steadfast and unparalleled commitment to the security of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East. We would not have let the resolution pass had it not also addressed counterproductive actions by Palestinians. We have to recognize that Israel faces very serious threats in a very tough neighbourhood. Israelis are rightly concerned about making sure that there is not a terrorist haven next door.

President Obama and this Administration have shown an unprecedented commitment to Israel's security because that is what we believe in. Our commitment to that security has never wavered and it never will. Even with the financial crisis and budget deficits, we repeatedly increase funding to support Israel's military. In September, the Obama Administration signed a memorandum of understanding to provide $38 billion in security assistance to Israel over the next 10 years — the largest single pledge of military assistance in the history of the United States to any country. As the Israeli Prime Minister himself has noted, our military and intelligence cooperation is unprecedented. We believe, however, that continued settlement building seriously undermines Israel's security.

Some may cast the vote of the United States as a sign that we have finally given up on a two-State solution. Nothing could be further from the truth. None of us can give up on a two-State solution. We continue to believe that that solution is the only viable path to provide peace and security for the State of Israel and freedom and dignity for the Palestinian people. We continue to believe that the parties concerned can still pursue that path if both sides are honest about the choices and have the courage to take steps that will be politically difficult. While we can encourage them, it is ultimately up to the parties to choose this path, as it always has been. We sincerely hope that they will begin to make those choices before it is too late.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): The adoption of resolution 2334 (2016) is an important and in many ways historic moment in the history of the Security Council. It is the first resolution adopted by the Council on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in eight years. It is the first time that the Security Council has expressed itself so clearly to state the obvious fact that, little by little, Israel settlement building undermines the possibility of building a viable and independent Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. It was therefore necessary for the Security Council to recall the collective and unanimous devotion of the international community to the two-State solution and to clearly lay out the threats to that solution. Unless we act resolutely to that end, the two-State solution will disappear like a mirage in the desert.

There is no credible alternative that could meet the legitimate aspirations of both parties.

Over the past few decades, Israeli settlement-building has undoubtedly accelerated, which only fuels tensions on the ground and exasperates the international community. Settlement-building, which is illegal under international law, is part of a deliberate policy aimed at presenting the population, including the international community, with a fait accompli in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It proceeds in various manifestations, including the expansion of settlements beyond the Green Line, including in East Jerusalem; the de facto annexation of Zone C; forced transfers of population; the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures; restrictions of access and movement; and the building of the wall beyond the 1967 border. This policy is not only illegal under international law, but also threatens the prospects for the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian State, which is the best guarantee for Israeli security and a lasting solution to the conflict. That is the message that France sought to send today by voting in favour of the resolution.

While settlements are the main threat to the two-State solution on the ground, unfortunately it is not the only one. Acts of violence and incitement to violence and terrorism also undermine the chances of seeing two States — Israel and Palestine — peacefully coexist one day. They destroy trust and dialogue between peoples who must find a way to live together. In that regard, resolution 2334 (2016) strongly reiterates its condemnation of all acts of terrorism, incitements to violence and all deliberate attacks on civilians. it calls on the Palestinian Authority to continue to do its utmost to discourage terrorist actions.

Identifying and naming the threats to a two-State solution is important but not enough. It is also necessary to work on recreating, after a two-year impasse, the conditions for resuming negotiations. Like the Palestinians, the Israelis have a vital interest in peace, which can be based only on a two-State solution. That is the aim of the French initiative to try to relaunch the peace process. In that respect, following the important ministerial meeting of 3 June, France decided to organize an international conference on 15 January 2017 in Paris, whose goal will be to introduce the contributions of the international community to relaunch the negotiation process and conclude and implement a peace agreement. We all know, of course, that only the Palestinians and Israelis themselves can achieve peace through direct negotiations.

The resolution that we have adopted today and the Paris international conference represent two sides of the same coin, both aimed at reiterating our shared attachment to the two-State solution and creating conditions conducive to that end. We hope that the resolution and the French initiative will be the first important steps towards relaunching a credible political process that we will need to pursue collectively in the weeks and months ahead. In sum, the resolution is certainly not the end of the road. It is an important and potentially historic step on the difficult and demanding path to peace and security in the Middle East. Let us assume together the heavy responsibility that is incumbent on all of us on that path.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the adoption of resolution 2334 (2014) in the conviction that it represents a unique opportunity to advance the peace process and restore trust between the parties, while allowing the Security Council to abandon its habitual inaction by engaging it in building an environment conducive to negotiations between the parties that take into consideration the aspirations and concerns of both and that upholds the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a free, sovereign and independent State in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II).

Of course, this resolution represents a mere first step, but it is a step in the right direction. This conflict is extremely complex and fraught with obstacles. There is an urgent need to respond decisively to the greatest challenge to the two-State solution — the continued expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on the occupied territory of the State of Palestine. Illegal settlements violate international law and the rights of the Palestinian people by depriving them of their land, destroying their homes and means of subsistence, restricting their free movements and undermining their right to social and economic development.

That is why the Council must speak categorically against this terrible problem. The United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council have the obligation and mandate to defend peace and international law. Furthermore, the United Nations and the Security Council have the moral obligation to support the Palestinian cause, as they are deeply responsible

for the tragedy and Nakba of the Palestinian people. That is why they must adopt all the resolutions they can to protect the weakest and force Israel to abide by international law and openly enter into a peace process based on the existence of two States.

The resolution we have adopted today is a first step on the path to a peaceful negotiated solution between Palestine and Israel with the support of the international community. It is therefore necessary for Israel, the occupying Power, to put an end to the policies derived from the prolonged occupation of the territories of the State of Palestine, as well as the inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip, which has lasted for almost a decade and is a flagrant violation of international law. Those are essential conditions for consolidating what we have achieved today and for moving forward towards a political solution in which Palestine, as a full member of the United Nations and with East Jerusalem as its capital, can live peacefully with Israel,within secure, internationally recognized pre-1967 borders.

The members of the Council have recognized that illegal settlements are a systematic obstacle to the peace process and a threat to the two-State solution. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly critical for Israel to assume its responsibilities and comply with the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly urging it to put an end to a pernicious practice that denies the human rights of the Palestinian population.

Furthermore, Venezuela reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, no matter who the authors may be and what their motives are. With the same emphasis, we condemn the continued violation of the most basic rights of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories and in Gaza, which continues to be blockaded and besieged by Israel, through the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force by Israeli military and security troops.

We repudiate the violence of extremist settlers against the Palestinian population and the policies of the occupying Power that subject Palestinian men, women and children to prison and illegal administrative detention. We call once again for the release of all children who are unfairly languishing in Israeli jails. Clearly, much remains to be done to reverse this negative situation and ensure that Israel complies with its obligations as an occupying Power. However, we recognize that today's decision opens a space needed for resuming dialogue and negotiation as the only means of resolving a conflict that has marked the history of the Middle East for almost 70 years.

We are pleased that at the end of our term in the Security Council, the Council has today had the vision and the courage to adopt this resolution. We therefore acknowledge the contribution of those who have participated in this historic outcome, especially Egypt, New Zealand and the countries that sponsored the resolution.

Venezuela reaffirms its unyielding commitment to peace, international security and the Palestinian cause. We will remain vigilant with regard to the evolution of the inescapable task of helping to bring about a negotiated peaceful settlement of the conflict, as provided for in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. Similarly, we will support in other forums all the efforts and initiatives directed to realizing the two-State solution in accordance with international law.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2334 (2016) on the Israeli settlements and appreciates the important role played by the sponsors in promoting its adoption.

The question of Palestine has been the crux of the Middle East issue. It is also the underlying cause of the situation in the region. Safeguarding the legitimate national interests of the Palestinian people is the shared responsibility of the international community. Recent years have seen the stalled peace talks between the two sides, the ever-expanding Israeli settlements, ongoing violence and conflict, the constantly deteriorating humanitarian situation and the growing tension between Palestine and Israel, all of which has threatened the vision of two States as well as regional peace and stability.

China has all along supported the Council in playing its due role on the question of Palestine. Resolution 2334 (2016) adopted by the Council today is significant in that it reflects the common aspiration and wish of the international community and heeds the just demand of Palestine and the Arab countries. We urge Israel to implement 2334 (2016) in a practical manner, immediately end its settlement activities and stop demolishing Palestinian homes in order to create conditions for the relaunch of the peace talks. China encourages both sides to honour their respective obligations, keep calm, exercise restrain and gradually

establish mutual trust so as to come back to the path of peace negotiations as soon as possible.

China has been a firm supporter of the just cause of the Palestinian people. China supports the Palestinian people in establishing a fully sovereign and independent State, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. China welcomes and supports all efforts that help ease tension between Israel and Palestine, achieve the two-State solution at an early date and support the peaceful coexistence between the two sides. China is ready to work with the international community in scaling up the diplomatic efforts to promote an early, comprehensive and just solution to the conflict between Palestine and Israel.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016) today. It is the first Security Council resolution on the Israel-Palestine issue in over seven years. The adoption of the resolution is first and foremost a clear reinforcement of the international community's conviction that a two-State solution remains the only viable route to sustained Arab-Israeli peace.

As the Quartet report in July 2016 highlighted, the foundations of peace — trust and goodwill — are being corroded from all sides because of violence, incitement, demolitions and settlement activity. Ultimately, as long as terrorists are treated as martyrs, peace will be distant. The scourge of anti-Semitic, racist and hateful language must be excised from the region. It is critical that the Palestinian leadership implement the recommendations of the Quartet report and continue their efforts to tackle terror and incitement, strengthen institutions and develop a sustainable economy. The United Kingdom will continue to provide the Palestinian authority with professional support in helping develop its security institutions.

But goodwill alone will not secure peace. Today's resolution is a sober recognition that the two-State solution is slipping away. By undermining the prospects for a contiguous Palestinian State, settlement construction is corroding the possibility of a two-State solution. Since the Oslo process in 1993, the population of settlements has doubled to 570,000, including 85,000 settlers deep in the West Bank. The Quartet report warns of sliding into a one-State reality of perpetual occupation and conflict. That is no future at all.

The United Kingdom is a dear and close friend of the State of Israel. We reject all efforts to delegitimize or undermine Israel. The movement for boycotts, divestment and sanctions, rooted as it is in a culture of prejudice and hostility to Israel, is a barrier to peace. My Government will never support any resolution that advances the cause of boycotts or delegitimization in any way. It is because of our steadfast and stalwart commitment to Israel's security — and its existence as the Jewish homeland — that we voted for today's resolution and worked tirelessly to secure a balanced final text. We believe that Israeli settlement activity represents a clear and present danger to our shared vision of two States for two peoples. The United Kingdom's long-standing view is that settlement expansion is illegal and not in Israel's long-term interests.

Today's resolution also takes important and balanced steps to support peace through, first of all, calling for immediate steps to prevent incitement and all acts of violence against civilians, including terror. It also calls for a strengthening of efforts to combat terrorism, including through existing security coordination, as well as clearly condemning all acts of terrorism. Secondly, the resolution calls upon both parties to act on the basis of international law and to refrain from provocative actions in order to build trust and create the conditions for peace. Thirdly, the resolution calls upon all parties to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final-status issues, urging the intensification and acceleration of international and regional efforts to support a comprehensive peace.

We have long held that if negotiations are to be successful, they will need to lead to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders with agreed land-swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capitol of both States and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

In closing, we recognize that the adoption of the resolution will not change the situation on the ground overnight. The year 2017 will not be an easy year for the Israel-Palestine issue, 50 years since the Six-Day War and the subsequent occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 100 years since my country issued the Balfour Declaration. However, we must all uphold our responsibility, as the Council has finally upheld its responsibility today, in order to deliver the long-term security that Israelis deserve and the statehood and end to the occupation that Palestinians are calling out for.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay voted in favour of resolution 2334 (2016), convinced that after eight years we finally had an historic opportunity to break the Council's stalemate, which has seriously threatened the two-State solution and the peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Resolution 2334 (2016), adopted a few minutes ago, responds to the ongoing call of Council members to disrupt the reigning status quo and reverse the negative trends on the ground, in particular the illegal settlements built by Israel in occupied Palestinian territory.

We are at a moment of great importance to the future of the Middle East peace process and the two-State solution. We hope that the resolution will serve as a call for action by both Israel and Palestine to promptly resume bilateral negotiations towards a just and lasting peace, taking the interests of both parties into account. Uruguay reaffirms its unwavering support for the right of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace within internationally recognized borders in an atmosphere of renewed cooperation and free from any threat or action that could threaten peace. We also reaffirm our support for the solution based on two independent States, as we are convinced it is the only possibility whereby Israel and Palestine could peacefully coexist.

It is very important for the authorities to send political signals of their desire to escape the current quagmire created by misunderstanding, hatred and violent confrontation. Likewise, both sides must refrain from adopting unilateral decisions that can undermine dialogue, and comply in good faith with their obligations under international law and the Council's resolutions.

Uruguay reaffirms its willingness to continue working to reactivate the peace process in the Middle East as quickly as possible and achieve once and for all the two-State solution of two States, living in peace and cooperation. We owe that to the many generations of Israelis and Palestinians that have been exhausted by many years of conflict.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation, I am sure like many others in the Chamber, was puzzled by the process that unfolded around today's resolution 2334 (2016). While the resolution has been worked on for many months, the apparent haste surrounding its adoption does not promote its ends.

For many years, our country has been involved in the Middle East peace process, first as co-chair of the Madrid process, then as a member of the Middle East Quartet and, of course, as a permanent member of the Security Council. Our experience confirms that the issue can be resolved only through direct and unconditional negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. That is precisely what dictated our work to arrange a September meeting in Moscow between Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and President Abbas of Palestine. The Palestinian side was ready to take part in the meeting.

Today, we voted in favour of the resolution on the Israeli settlements, convinced that it was based on tested language reflecting the general position of the international community on the illegality of Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories. We believe it important that the document also condemns violent acts against civilians and acts of terrorism and appeals to both sides to end the violence and the rhetoric of incitement and provocation, which only fuel an atmosphere of distrust and confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis. There is no doubt that such actions undermine the possibility of achieving a two-State solution to the Palestinian question.

Russia will continue working on reanimating the negotiations and restoring Palestinian unity based on the political platform of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Arab Peace Initiative. In that connection we confirm the importance of the ongoing work of the Quartet as an effective and approved mechanism of the Security Council in the Middle East peace process.

We also note that the July report of the Quartet (S/2016/595, annex) on the situation in the Palestinian-Israeli track is still very relevant as a strong signal from the international community to both sides of the conflict. Implementing the recommendations contained in the report would contribute to returning the peace process to the political track.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan is deeply concerned about the current stagnation in the peace process and alarmed that a two-State solution may be slipping from our reach. We have been consistent in our position that settlement activity is in violation of international law and that it has been steadily eroding the viability of a two-State solution. With that in mind, Japan voted in favour of resolution 2334 (2016).

It is important that the parties commit themselves to the resolution just adopted so as to make meaningful progress in the Middle East peace process. The Council also must reaffirm its commitment to a two-State solution and support the parties to that end. Japan remains firm in its belief that peace in the region can be realized only through negotiations and will not recognize any unilateral change by either party that may prejudge the final resolution.

I would like to conclude by stressing that Japan will continue to engage in this matter both in and out of the Council in order to facilitate the peace process with a view to achieving a two-State solution.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Today, after decades of paralysis in the Council on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Council has finally exercised its legal, political and moral responsibility to take effective action to reverse the negative trends that are threatening peace and the two-State solution. With the historic adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), we prove our sincere commitment to peace and to the two-State solution. We sincerely thank all Council members who voted in support of the resolution today. We are also encouraged by the exemplary restraint shown by the permanent members of the Council. Malaysia also appreciates the full support and solidarity shown by New Zealand, Venezuela and Senegal in carrying the resolution forward.

We have been persistently warned that the settlement enterprise constitutes the single biggest threat to peace and the two-State solution. It is illegal under international law, as reinforced by the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and in various Council resolutions. They also lead to settler violence, home demolitions, land confiscations, as well as to discriminatory policies and the denial of development, infrastructure and natural resources. Decades of great injustice and gross violations of human rights have perpetuated anger and frustration for those who have nothing to lose, leading to further radicalization in the region and beyond.

Recent developments have made it even more urgent for the Council to act, particularly the brazen attempt by the Israeli Parliament to legalize outposts on private Palestinian lands. We need to send a strong and clear signal that this is simply not acceptable. Today the Council has redeemed itself to steer the parties in the right direction, away from violence and unjust and illegal acts. We are giving hope to both the people of Israel and the people of Palestine, the majority of whom still believe in the two-State solution and still want peace. This is not just a victory for Palestine, it is a victory for the Security Council, for the United Nations, for the rule of law, for peace and for humankind as a whole. It is also a victory for the people of Israel who still believe in living side by side in peace and security with the Palestinians and their Arab neighbours. In the next few months, the Council should continue to exert pressure on both sides to ensure compliance with resolution 2334 (2016). We also urge all Member States to abide by their obligations under the resolution to halt settlement activities.

As we enter into 50 years of Israeli occupation in 2017, we need to take a step back to reflect on our collective failures for the past half-century that have led to our current predicament on the viability of the two-State solution. Although our action today is significant in halting settlement activities, we need to recognize that we are addressing the symptoms and not the root causes of the conflict. In the long term, the Council and the international community must galvanize their efforts to end the longest occupation in modern history, which has given rise to sustaining the settlement enterprise.

We therefore urge all parties to intensify their efforts to resume the peace process in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and various initiatives, including the Arab Peace Initiative. We also reaffirm our support for all diplomatic initiatives to that end, including by France and Russia.

Lastly, although Malaysia's days in the Council are coming to an end, we will continue to play an active role in creating the necessary conditions for peace in the region and defending the two-State solution, in line with our principled position on the Palestinian question.

Mr. Martins (Angola): Angola welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2334 (2016). I would like to thank the sponsors — Egypt, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and Venezuel — for presenting it to the Council.

For far too long, a source of deep frustration and despair to the international community as a whole has been the continued expansion of illegal settlements by the Israeli authorities, which have perpetuated an

atmosphere of mistrust, hostility and violence among Israelis and Palestinians. There is no doubt that the settlements are illegal under international law, and therefore we find it disappointing that the Israeli authorities dispute that and believe that their final status should be determined in talks on Palestinian statehood.

Palestinian statehood will not be possible if settlements are expanded; then any possibility of a contiguous Palestinian State would be eliminated. Therefore, we urge both parties to refrain from any negative unilateral actions that could hinder the prospect of the two States living side by side in peace and harmony.

A Council resolution represents only a positive contribution to peace and security in the world, which again is the primary raison d'être of the Council; that is, if the resolution can be implemented. I hope that resolution 2334 (2016), which we just adopted, will be effectively implemented, particularly by all key parties. This calls for the unity of the Security Council, unity by the Palestinians, unity in Israel. Above all, resolution 2334 (2016) calls for a commitment to peace, particularly by the two main parties, Israel and Palestine.

In conclusion, let me say that the resolution is not an imposition of terms by the United Nations, but rather a measure to salvage the prospects of the two-State solution. Therefore, we hope that we will definitely see this as a step in the right direction, as we have several times reiterated in the Council.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): Today is a significant day for the Security Council, as the applause ringing around the Chamber earlier this afternoon attests. I was so very pleased that in this last meeting of the year we are able to adopt a very positive step on this most very difficult issue. The applause reflects the pent-up frustration that the Council has been unable for so long to adopt a resolution on the Israeli-Palestine issue, despite regular reports from the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator that the two-State solution was slipping away and that urgent action was necessary to arrest it.

As I noted earlier, the focus of resolution 2334 (2016) is on settlements: the primary threat to the viability of the two-State solution. However, as others have pointed out, the resolution also includes welcome elements on the need to stop violence and incitement and lays the groundwork for a return to negotiations. There is no question that ongoing Israeli settlement in the occupied territories is a significant obstacle to a return to negotiations and a grave threat to the very viability of a future Palestinian State. As my Foreign Minister said earlier this month, those settlements violate international law, and those settlements have created enemies where there should have been neighbours.

Every settlement creates false hope for the settlers that the land will one day be part of a greater Israel. Every settlement takes land away from Palestinians needing homes or farmland or roads. Today's resolution provides important signals to the parties and to the international community about the way forward. It reaffirms the central importance of preserving the two-State solution as the only model we have for achieving a negotiated peace. The resolution also prepares the ground for a return to negotiations as soon as possible. The resolution reaffirms, through the United Nations most powerful organ, that settlements in the occupied territories are contrary to Israel's obligations under international law and a major obstacle to peace. It condemns the acts of violence, provocation, terror and incitement that have driven the two sides apart and hardened feelings of hostility and mistrust on both sides.

The reporting mechanism the resolution establishes should provide a firm foundation for the Council to continue to encourage the parties towards negotiations on a viable two-State solution. We recognize that there is much more that the resolution might have done. The Council must stand ready to provide additional support to the parties, including by setting out the parameters for negotiations when the time is right. But today we have focused on what is achievable right now, and that is what we believe today's text represents.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): By deciding to co-sponsor resolution 2334 (2016), along with Malaysia, New Zealand and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Senegal wishes to reaffirm its principled position on the settlements, which are illegal from the point of view of international law. Indeed, at a tiime when the peace process is at a stalemate, we see a continued and accelerated progress of building settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In addition to compromising the chance for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, those settlements and occupations foment the violence that affects both Israelis and Palestinians and the possibility for both peoples to live side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

Together with the Israelis and Palestinians, with whom we, as members of the Council, share the same aspirations for peace and stability, we must find a path to negotiations with a view to reaching a peaceful, happy and definitive solution to the dispute. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew our disapproval and condemnation of acts of terrorism and incitement to violence, no matter who the authors are or what the motives may be.

My delegation reaffirms the urgency of relaunching the peace process. That is why we encourage the ongoing initiatives, such as that of France, and diplomatic efforts, such as those undertaken by Egypt and the Russian Federation; all of such initiatives, in our view, require greater coordination.

In conclusion, it is up to the international community, and first and foremost the Security Council as the guarantor of international peace and security, to work on the two-State solution. Our faith was restored by the remarks President Macky Sall delivered during the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

> "Despite the stalemate of the peace process, I have the strong conviction that efforts must be continued, strengthened and intensified in order to realize the two-State solution. The two States, Israel and Palestine, should be able to live side by side in peace and security, each of them within its own internationally recognized borders, in accordance with all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the efforts of the Quartet."

On that basis, Senegal, faithful to its principles and foreign policy, and also as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, continues to engage in dialogue and consultation in order to reach a two-State solution.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I would like to start by thanking all the sponsors for their efforts, as well as the delegations that worked so intensely to achieve such a historic result. Spain voted in favour of resolution 2334 (2016) because we are convinced that it will contribute to preserving the two-State solution, which we believe is the only solution that can lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis.

That peace could never be determined externally, but will need to be negotiated between the two parties. However, the international community does have an obligation to do everything it can to promote an agreement. With today's vote, the Security Council did what it had to do. Over the past two years, as a non-Permanent Member of the Security Council, Spain has repeated on numerous occasions that we were in favour of the Council expressing its position on the Palestinian question when the time was right and, if possible, to adopt a text on which there was consensus that could truly advance the peace process. That day has come today. The text of the resolution that we adopted today fulfils, as we see it, the necessary requirements. It is a balanced text that strives for nothing more than to act in favour of peace.

Over these two years, we have also repeated many times in this same Chamber the position of Spain on the Palestinian question. We have always stated that the settlements are counter to international law and one of the main obstacles to make the two-State solution a reality so that Israel and Palestine can live in peace and security within mutually recognized borders. Furthermore, we have also stated that the incitement to hatred and acts of terrorism are not only morally and legally reprehensible, but they also undermine efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and they should be strongly condemned. The resolution that we have just adopted is fully compatible with that position.

As the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon recalled last week here in the Chamber (ses S/PV.7839), over the past 10 years the Security Council has pronounced itself only twice on the Palestinian question — the last time being eight years ago. We welcome the fact that such silence has been broken and we see this as the result of the work carried out by the Security Council, month after month, throughout these years. Spain has contributed to that work, motivated only by its sincere wish to help the cause of peace. Spain will continue working as long as it is necessary, based on that same motivation, to contribute to a just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, which would be the outcome of a negotiated agreement between the two parties.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Today is a dark day for the Security Council. Resolution 2334 (2016), which members just voted on, is the peak of hypocrisy. While thousands are being massacred in Syria, the Council has wasted valuable time and efforts condemning the democratic State of Israel for building homes in the historic homeland of the Jewish people. We have presented the truth time and again to the Council, and implored it not to believe the lies presented in the resolution. By voting in favour of the resolution, members of the Council have in fact voted no. They voted no to negotiations. They voted no to progress and a chance for better lives for Israelis and Palestinians. And they voted no to the possibility of peace.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressing the Council one week ago said that the United Nations had

> "created a disproportionate volume of resolutions, reports and conferences criticizing Israel" (*S/PV.7839, p.4*).

The resolution today will be added to the long and shameful list of anti-Israel United Nations resolutions. Instead of charting a course forward members are sending a message to the Palestinians, that they should continue on the path of terrorism and incitement; that they should continue to hold their own people hostage; that they should continue to seek meaningless statements.The sad truth is that today's vote will be a victory for terror; it will be a victory for hatred and violence. By continuing to provide excuses for the Palestinians to avoid recognizing our right to exist, Council members are only maintaining the status quo.

The world is undergoing great change, and the new Secretary-General will soon assume office. I call on the Council to take this opportunity to turn a new page, put an end to the bias and obsession with Israel, stop such endless attempts to blame all the problems of the Middle East on the one true democracy in the region and make clear to the Palestinians that the only way forward is to end the incitement and terror and enter into direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel.

Just two months ago, UNESCO approved an absurd resolution, denying the connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem. Today the Council, including many of the world's leading democracies — the beacons of liberty — voted to condemn the State of Israel. Members voted to condemn the Jewish people for building homes in the land of Israel, members voted to ban us from building in our historical capital of Jerusalem, the heart and soul of the Jewish people, with the resolution. Tomorrow night, Israel and the entire Jewish community around the world will celebrate the holy day of Hanukkah. Over 2,000 years ago, King Antiochus banished the Jewish people from our temple in Jerusalem and issued decrees trying to sever us from religion and our heritage. But we prevailed; the Jewish people fought back. We gained our independence and we relit menorah candles in the temples.

I ask each and every member of the Council who voted for the resolution: Who gave members the right to issue such a decree, denying our eternal rights in Jerusalem? Would the Council have had the nerve to condemn the countries of Council members for building homes in their capitals? Would members ban the French from building in Paris? Would members ban the Russians from building in Moscow? Would members ban the Chinese from building in Beijing? Would members ban the British from building in London? Would members ban the Americans from building in Washington, D.C.?

We overcame such decrees during the time of the Maccabees and we will overcome today's evil decree. We have full confidence in the justice of our cause and in the righteousness of our path. We will continue to be a democratic State, based on the rule of law and full civil and human rights for all our citizens, and we will continue to be a Jewish State, proudly reclaiming the land of our forefathers, where the Maccabees fought the repressors, and King David ruled from Jerusalem.

This holy book, the Bible, contains 3,000 years of history of the Jewish people in the land of Israel. Absolutely no one can change that history.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I express the State of Palestine's sincere appreciation for the principled efforts you have exerted, in both your national capacity as well as in Spain's capacity as President of the Security Council for this month.

The Council's action, while long overdue, is timely, necessary and important. Resolution 2334 (2016) adopted today reaffirms the Council's decades-long position that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem,

the eternal capital of the State of Palestine, have no legal validity, constitute flagrant breaches under international law, namely the Fourth Geneva Convention, and constitute a major obstacle to peace, gravely diminishing the viability of the two-State solution based on the 4 June 1967 borders and the possibility of realizing it.

We express our appreciation to all the Council members that supported the resolution. They have adopted the resolution on behalf of the entire international community, reflecting the long-standing global consensus on the matter. We must also express our gratitude to the four co-sponsors — Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and Venezuela. They have acted in line with their constant calls for action to redress the unjust situation, firm in their responsibilities as Council members. We also thank Angola, as well as the Non-Aligned Movement caucus members, for their abiding support. Of course, we also thank our brothers in Egypt, the Arab representative on the Council, for all efforts exerted throughout the process. Let me also thank all those who applauded the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016) here in the Chamber, and the millions who have applauded in all corners of the globe, especially those in the State of Palestine.

Over the years we have made countless appeals to the Council to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations, convinced of its central role and the primacy of international law, and insisting on the need for concerted action to confront Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people and relentless colonization of our land under its half-century foreign occupation. Our appeals have sought, in the short term, to alleviate the suffering of our people, a defenceless civilian population denied of their rights, dignity and humanity. However, our appeals have also been calls for the Council to contribute to the cause of peace in the long term — peace for Palestine, peace for Israel, peace for the Middle East region and peace for our world.

We have not been alone in our appeals; they have been echoed by Security Council members themselves and by the States, organizations, international civil servants and civil society that have come before the Council to implore it to act, including specifically to address the illegality of Israeli settlement activities in occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and the erosion of the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders and the prospects for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

That the Council has finally chosen to act is significant. Let me repeat: that the Council has finally chosen to act is significant, after years of paralysis, as is the fact that the resolution has been adopted with overwhelming majority support. However, this step requires vigilant follow-up, if it is to be meaningful, so as to stem further deterioration and salvage the two-State solution from relegation to history's archives. Urgent efforts are needed to reverse the dangerous, negative trends on the ground and to advance our collective efforts to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, and achieve freedom, rights and justice for the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, leading to Palestinian-Israeli peace and security, as well as the goal of Arab-Israeli peace.

No "bashing" is taking place, as repeatedly claimed by the Israeli Government — not by Palestine, not by the Council, nor by any who have time and again urged the Council to act in the interest of peace and security. Claims of bashing are beyond being offensive, because in reality today's action may be too little too late. After years of allowing the law to be trampled upon and the situation to spiral downward, today's resolution 2334 (2016) may rightly be seen as a last attempt to preserve the two-State solution and revive the path to peace to keep hope alive. For many, that seems virtually impossible at this point as Israel, the occupying Power, has been permitted to entrench its occupation and a one-State reality with absolute impunity, at times even being rewarded for its violations and intransigence.

Against that backdrop, one Council resolution in nearly eight years is not disproportionate; it is shameful. But today's vote rectifies that record and sets us on a new course.

The fact is that only Israel is doing the bashing — of the Council and the entire United Nations system — members heard what the Israeli representative said — of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. For five decades, despite resolution 242 (1967), calling for Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967, and all the resolutions thereafter, Israel has persisted full force with its occupation. Its illegal settlements and the wall have severely fragmented our land, undermined its contiguity and isolated East Jerusalem — the heart and capital of our State and de facto Israeli

annexation of which the international community has never recognized and continues to reject. Convictions in the rationality, feasibility and fairness of the two-State solution have been destroyed, as reflected in the growing negative sentiments among Palestinians, whether those besieged and inhumanely blockaded for nearly a decade in the Gaza Strip, or those enduring the colonization onslaught and daily settler terror in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, or those in the diaspora, including in our refugee camps across the region, whose patience in awaiting justice and a peaceful solution is legendary, yet now so frail.

To the audacious claims of bias, we say that the only bias taking place is that against the law, against reason and against the vision of two States as the most viable solution to this prolonged, illegal occupation and disastrous, tragic conflict. We have heard it loud and clear in the gleeful boasts by some Israeli officials that "the two-State solution is dead" and "there will be no Palestinian State". We witness it in the constant Israeli schemes, including Knesset ploys, attempting to pervert the law to accommodate the unlawful and the pretexts used to expropriate and colonize our land and deepen the occupation. We witness it in Israel's blatant contempt of the global demands to comply with its obligations under the law, as is expected of every single other State in the international community, and to finally commit to the path of peace. But today the Council has said, "enough". And we thank Council members for that.

Resolution 2334 (2016) represents a necessary step for addressing one of the most critical aspects of the longest issue on the United Nations agenda, a 70-year open wound, precluding peace and stability in our region, with far-reaching consequences, not least of which is fuelling the anger and despair that injustice breeds, especially among youth, who see no present or future, and undeniably fuelling much of the radicalism and extremism plaguing our region and world.

The Security Council must stand firm by that decision, stand by the law and stand on the right side of history. It should not be cowed by negative threats or spin; the Council is doing the right thing by adopting resolution 2334 (2016). We hope this global call for a cessation of Israeli settlement activities and violations will serve to compel compliance with the law, de-escalate tensions, bring an end to the violence, including all acts of terror, provocations and incitement, and reverse the negative trends on the ground. That is vital for salvaging the prospects for peace.

With the Council leading by responsible action, including follow-up of the reports requested of the Secretary-General on the resolution's implementation, we hope that the coming period will be one of serious effort to set the course for a credible political horizon and help the parties advance towards a peaceful solution. We recognize fully the Arab States' efforts in the context of the Arab Peace Initiative, which remains a cornerstone for peace, and the efforts of France, the Quartet, Egypt and the Russian Federation. We hope that those collective efforts, with international support, will be fulfilled.

We remain firm in our belief that peace — the central purpose of the Organization — is more than worthy of both international legislation and action. We therefore urge intensification of international and regional efforts to achieve, without delay, an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the 1991 Madrid Conference terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, whereby the Palestinian people will realize their rights and justice, including a just solution for the Palestine refugees on the basis of resolution 194 (III), and can finally live in freedom and dignity, exercising their inalienable right to self-determination in their independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and within secure and recognized borders.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before concluding this meeting, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Spain to the Council members, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, their respective staff and teams and also to the secretariat of the Council for all the support they have given us. It has been a very busy month, and it would not have been possible to achieve this outcome without the contribution of the delegations, the representatives of the Secretariat, the interpreters, the translators, meeting services, sound engineers, as well as the security officers who kept the Council safe day after day this month.

As this could be the last public meeting of the Security Council for December 2016, I would like, on

behalf of the Council, to express the sincere appreciation of the Council to the outgoing members — Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. I wish to commend their hard work and contributions during their term on the Security Council from 2015 to 2016.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7854

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7854th meeting
Friday, 30 December 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Faye
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Bayley Angeleri

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/1126)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/1126)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1118, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/1126, which contains the text of a letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2335 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to the member of the Council who wishes to make a statement following the voting.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): Today's adoption of a short-term extension of the processes and escrow accounts related to winding up the oil-for-food programme brings us a step closer to closing the book on that programme. The Government of Iraq and the United Nations requested this temporary extension to tie up a few outstanding issues. The United Nations and the Government of Iraq have made substantial progress on this file in the past year, having held successful negotiations and resolved a number of complex legal matters. We hope that both parties might take today's adoption as an indication of the Security Council's support for their efforts to close this file once and for all.

The meeting rose at 10.05 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7855

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7855th meeting
Saturday, 31 December 2016, 1 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Toro-Carnevali

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/1133)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/1133)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1138, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation and Turkey.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/1133, which contains a letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2336 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): Yesterday, we learned from our Russian colleagues about a proposed arrangement that Russia and Turkey had concluded to introduce a cessation of hostilities and restart intra-Syrian discussions. Their goals are laudable and we welcome all efforts to end the violence in Syria and strongly support a nationwide ceasefire accompanied by unfettered humanitarian access to all besieged areas.

That having been said, we are still learning more about this initiative, including details regarding its implementation. In this regard, we regret that the annexes to the agreements, which outline the ceasefire arrangement brokered by Russia and Turkey in detail, have not yet been made available.

We voted in favour of resolution 2336 (2016) because it strikes the right balance between cautious optimism and support, predicated on hope but tempered by a realistic need to wait to see how this arrangement is implemented before casting the full weight of the Security Council behind it. We would highlight two key points.

Our hope is that a ceasefire will truly hold and will not serve as a justification for further unacceptable offensives. In that regard, we are concerned at reports of a regime offensive, supported by Hizbullah militia, in Wadi Barada. The Security Council's adoption of this text should be seen as a strong signal that such activities must cease.

We have also seen press reports that some signatories are concerned about differences between regime and opposition versions of delegation documents. In that regard, we hope that the reconciliation of any differences — or an explanation of why there are differences — will occur swiftly. We especially stress that paragraph 2 of the resolution just adopted emphasizes the need for the full implementation of resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016). Likewise, it is clear from paragraph 3 that talks in Astana will relate directly to the United Nations process.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): France is in favour of any initiative to save civilian lives in Syria. It was in that spirit that, on 16 December, it proposed a draft resolution to deploy an evacuation monitoring mechanism in Aleppo. It is for those same reasons that France today voted in favour of resolution 2336 (2016).

France hopes that this ceasefire agreement will be implemented immediately and calls on the guarantors to assume their full responsibilities in this

regard. The text of the Russian-Turkish agreement, as partially presented to the Security Council yesterday, nevertheless still contains areas of obscurity.

France's first concern concerns the genuine adherence of the Syrian parties to the truce agreement, while bombardments have been carried out by the regime in violation of the agreement in the past 48 hours, while a regime offensive, supported by Iran, is still under way in the Barada valley. The Security Council has received no document signed by the regime or opposition groups. The list of groups considering themselves to be parties to the agreement has not been communicated to us. Russia said that some groups had mandated others to accede to the agreement, which is not corroborated by the texts that have been transmitted to us.

Under these conditions, the degree of commitment of the parties to the truce appears relatively uncertain and its implementation fragile. In particular, France considers that the cessation of hostilities must apply to all armed groups, with the exception of groups designated as terrorists by the Security Council. Armed groups that are not parties to the cessation of hostilities should not automatically be regarded as terrorists.

It is also essential that the monitoring of compliance with the ceasefire be coordinated with the United Nations. In this respect, France would have liked to be able to study, with its partners, the modalities of extending the monitoring arrangements provided for in resolution 2328 (2016) to other localities in Syria. France remains at the disposal of the guarantors to consider a rigorous and impartial monitoring mechanism.

All the efforts of the international community must now be aimed at facilitating the resumption of the negotiations to be held on 8 February under the auspices of Staffan de Mistura, to whom we reiterate our full support. The preparatory exercises must fall within the framework defined by resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). The Astana meeting could be a useful first step in that regard. To that end, the process of appointing opposition representatives to the Astana meeting should be transparent. However, it raises important questions. France recalls that the High Negotiation Committee is the legitimate representative of the opposition in the inter-Syrian negotiations. There can be no credible exercise that excludes it.

France hopes that the discussions on these points will continue in a transparent manner with a view to an effective political transition, which is essential if Syria is to recover and begin its reconstruction. France remains fully committed to the search for a lasting solution to the conflict, which has lasted too long.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the efforts of Russia, Turkey and others to reduce the level of fighting in Syria. We also welcome the efforts of the presidency, Russia and Turkey, and all other Council members to work for the adoption of a resolution that all Council members could support. That is a demonstration of what the Council can do when we turn our collective minds to achieving a positive outcome. We are very pleased, therefore, that the Council could put its weight behind a measure designed to reduce civilian suffering in Syria and restart the political process.

As others have said, there are aspects of the ceasefire and other agreements that must be clarified. In particular, there are uncertainties about the participation of opposition groups in the ceasefire and the Astana talks. The implications for groups that are not participating should also be clarified. New Zealand would also welcome greater clarity about humanitarian access and the role of the United Nations in the Astana political process. That said, we are pleased that the Council was able to come together to support this important development.

New Zealand's term on the Security Council will end very soon. We hope that further clarity will be provided and that this agreement will alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people and help to put Syria on a path to a lasting and enduring peace. Since this is, I hope, the last time we will be addressing the Council during our current term, I would like to conclude by commending the Spanish presidency for its outstanding leadership over the past month and by thanking all our colleagues in the Secretariat for the courtesy and cooperation they have shown me and my delegation over the past two years.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom supports all efforts to maintain a full, nationwide cessation of hostilities and an end to the bloodshed in Syria. For that reason, we welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2336 (2016) today. In the coming days and weeks the world will be watching to make sure that the ceasefire is upheld.

We call on all the parties to adhere to the terms of the ceasefire. Those with influence over them, particularly the Russian and Turkish guarantors, must use it to ensure that the ceasefire lasts. We are concerned about reports of violations on the ground. The ceasefire is the essential first step required to create the conditions for the return to political negotiations, which we all agree is the only way to end this terrible conflict. In order to ensure that, the confusion over some of the key texts and the discrepancies between them must be resolved. As the failure of previous cessations of hostilities has shown, monitoring the ceasefire will be crucial.

The role of the United Nations is essential. As guarantors of the agreement, Russia and Turkey must ensure that any monitoring measures are genuinely independent and closely coordinated with the United Nations and with the International Syria Support Group's ceasefire task force. Fundamental to the ceasefire's success is implementation, not just of this agreement and the resolution we have just voted on, but also of other Security Council resolutions, which, when they were agreed on, gave us a sadly short-lived optimism that the suffering of the Syrian people would see some respite.

First and foremost, all sides must ensure unfettered humanitarian access across the country, as is required by resolution 2328 (2016), adopted earlier this month. Secondly, the talks in Astana must be in support of the United Nations-led political process, under Special Envoy De Mistura. The United Kingdom will be a steadfast supporter of any steps towards an inclusive political settlement that realizes the aspiration for a peaceful Syria, as set out in resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex).

As we end 2016, we can all agree that it is time to end the bloodshed in Syria. The ceasefire is still very fresh, and the situation on the ground will develop in the coming days and weeks. But if the ceasefire holds, I sincerely hope that it can provide a foundation for a breakthrough in the wider political process, and that 2017 turns out to be a far better year for the people of Syria than 2016 has been. Following a political transition, we will all have to support reconstruction.

Mr. Martins (Angola): Like the other members of the Security Council, Angola voted in favour of resolution 2336 (2016), and we would like to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for convening today's meeting for the unanimous adoption of a resolution aimed at establishing a ceasefire agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic. We should consider it a real contribution to creating a path to peace and stability in a country that has occupied such a central place on our agenda during the past year, the year that is about to end. We would like to commend the Russian Federation for the central role that it has played in achieving that goal, and Turkey for the joint agreement that has been signed. We look forward to the peace talks to be held in Astana.

Obviously, there are no perfect agreements. What is essential is that the efforts should focus on the common goal of achieving peace and enabling the citizens of Syria to reconcile and rebuild their nation within parameters that they establish themselves, with the support of the international community. The Security Council resolution remains a relevant and important instrument for resolving the conflict. We are aware that its unanimous adoption has reinforced the chances for peace, and that unanimity represents a very good way of ending the year with a decision that we have repeatedly insisted on — that the solution must be a political one. This decision will enable that.

As Angola's membership of the Security Council ends — and coincides with the very last day of 2016 — I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our colleagues and the members of the Council a very peaceful and prosperous new year.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are greatly encouraged by the Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2336 (2016), submitted by the Russian Federation and Turkey in support of the urgent call by the Syrian people and the international community for a cessation of hostilities on the ground and a speedy start to negotiations for a political settlement that can provide a comprehensive peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria. In that regard, we welcome the meeting to be held in Astana at the end of January between the Syrian Government and the opposition, and we wish it every success. It will be particularly important to ensure that the agreements forged by Russia and Turkey — along with resolution 2328 (2016), adopted on 19 December — form an integral part of the determined efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, establishing once and for all the conditions and standards for all the national, regional and international stakeholders

and supporting the peace process. With the adoption of today's resolution, Venezuela leaves the Security Council proud of having helped the Syrian people to reach this important moment.

We congratulate you, Mr. President, on the success of your presidency, and we thank the Secretariat for all the support it has given us over the past two years.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): The Ukrainian delegation voted in favour of resolution 2336 (2016) today for one reason, which is that it focuses on establishing a ceasefire regime. While numerous questions linger about the scope and substance of all the understandings reached in Ankara on 29 December, we support all efforts to put an end to the bloodshed and alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. In that regard, we would like to stress that, in order to make the ceasefire work, the necessary level of confidence and trust — which is clearly missing after so many years of the conflict in Syria — must be established among all the parties. The latest reports of fighting in Wadi Barada testify to the fragility of the situation.

Although it is a part of human nature to hope for the best, given the track record of broken ceasefires and the deficit of trust in one of the guarantors of the latest one, at this point we would caution the Council to be prudent and to keep a watchful eye on further developments as we enter the new year.

As this is hopefully the last time we will meet under the Spanish presidency, let me conclude by expressing our sincere thanks and congratulations to the delegation of Spain for its dedicated efforts and leadership during this difficult month.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Russian Federation and Turkey for this proposal. Although the text is imperfect could have been further improved, we voted in its favour. Today, similar to what occured on 19 December when the Security Council adopted resolution 2328 (2016), members had additional consultations to occur and for adjustments to be made to the original text. To our satisfaction, that strengthened the text and made possible its unanimous adoption.

As indicated in today's resolution 2336 (2016), it will be necessary to implement the provisions of resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016), and to harmonize the forthcoming Astana talks with the United-Nations-backed negotiations. We sincerely hope that 2017 will be a better year for the Syrian Arab Republic and Syrians than the year ending today. With everyone participating, we can achieve a lasting cessation of hostilities and the resumption of successful political negotiations. We owe that to the tens of thousands of Syrian civilians who lost their lives in this terrible war.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the Spanish presidency for its leadership and the consistent coordinating role it played in achieving consensus among Council members during the month of December.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): With regard to the Syrian crisis, the efforts of my country have been focused on one priority, namely, putting an end to the suffering of the Syrian people. We are committed to that approach and support any approach that prioritizes the Syrian people, regardless of the interests that can be seen at play and which are the real cause of the suffering in that country. We have voted in favour of all resolutions put to vote in the Security Council that were aimed at providing access to humanitarian aid, regardless of the party that put those resolutions to vote.

With our partners Spain and New Zealand, we undertook an initiative to put an end to the hostilities and to ensure that humanitarian aid was delivered. We never hesitated to use our experience or diplomatic strength to attempt to resolve the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. That is why, and this is in parallel with our consistent position, we voted in favour of resolution 2336 (2016), which calls for an end to the hostilities. We must act quickly to remedy the high level of violence and to launch the diplomatic process. We know that this will not lead to a complete cessation of the violence and the hostilities but, at the very least, it is a step in the right direction, and one on which we can continue to build.

Initiatives aimed at resolving the Syrian crisis have multiplied over the last few years. As with any other initiative, there are no complete or ideal initiatives. We need real intentions that will result in a final settlement. Regardless of the nature of those approaches and initiatives, all of us must look at the previous frameworks agreed upon at the international level and base our actions on them as we we move forward.

We backed today's resolution, including the references to resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), which are the foundations for any settlement. Furthermore, we

wish to reiterate that the current challenges, which will continue for a long time, require a comprehensive political approach based on those frameworks. It is true that we see a military approach being taken on the ground, but that can never be the solution. For that reason we call upon all Syrian parties to act in a responsible way, especially with respect to their communities and their people. During this transition phase, dialogue should be initiated between the Government and the opposition as rapidly as possible in order to find a Syrian solution without any foreign intervention. That solution should protect the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and result in the realization of the aspirations of the Syrian people, far from the reality of violence and extremism.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): There are no military solutions to the protracted and complex Syrian crisis. That is a conclusion the Security Council has reached repeatedly here in this Chamber, and that is why the Senegalese delegation, having backed resolution 2236 (2016), submitted by the Russian Federation, is gratified to see that it enjoyed unanimous support. The Senegalese delegation reaffirms that a solution conducive to the resolution of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic will involve a political process, without exception, and be Syrian-led on the basis of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), as underscored in the various resolutions adopted by the Council, in particular resolutions 2118 (2013), 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016).

The Senegalese delegation is gratified by the fact that this resolution refers to swift and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance throughout Syrian territory. For that reason our delegation would like to congratulate the delegation of the Russian Federation for its constructive spirit and the flexibility it consistently demonstrated throughout the negotiation process of what has today become resolution 2336 (2016). There could be no nicer gift for the Syrian people, who have suffered so long from this conflict.

Before I conclude, I would like to convey to the Spanish delegation and to Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi the warm congratulations of the Senegalese delegation for a very productive Council presidency during the month of December. I wish you a happy new year.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China): China welcomes the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Syrian Government and the opposition, and appreciates the positive result achieved by the Russian Federation and Turkey in facilitating its conclusion. China welcomes the fact that the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2336 (2016). This reflects the support of the United Nations and the international community for a comprehensive ceasefire in the Syrian Arab Republic and a political settlement of the Syrian issue. The resolution is conducive to the strengthening of mutual trust among the conflicting parties, the advancement of the political process, the easing of the humanitarian situation in the country and the efforts to combat terrorism. China hopes that the Syrian Government and the opposition groups concerned will effectively and comprehensively implement the ceasefire agreement and calls on other opposition groups to join the ceasefire arrangement as soon as possible.

The political solution is the only way out for Syria. The international community should seize the current favourable opportunity and work on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria to create conditions for relaunching the political process in the country as soon as possible. China hopes that the United Nations and the international community will work towards the comprehensive implementation of the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016).

Special Envoy De Mistura has announced the relaunching of Geneva talks in February 2017. We hope that the peace talks will promote the political process in Syria with a view to achieving positive results at an early date. China hopes that the Astana meeting, as an important component part of the political process led by Syria and an important step towards the relaunching of the Geneva peace talks will play a positive role in advancing the political settlement of the question of Syria. China calls on the Syrian parties to cherish this hard-won achievement, set as their priorities the fundamental interests of their nation and the security of their people, come back to the track of dialogue and consultations, and work under the principle of Syrian-owned and Syria-led processes so as to reach a political settlement acceptable to all.

China has taken active part in promoting the political process in Syria and is willing to continue to work with the rest of the international community for a comprehensive, fair and appropriate settlement of the Syrian issue.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): About two weeks ago, in the midst of a difficult setting, the Security Council managed to find convergence and unanimity to endorse the evacuation operation out of eastern Aleppo (resolution 2328 (2016)). As a result of the Council's action, the swift deployment of United Nations personnel to oversee and monitor the evacuation alongside International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, a successful evacuation with minimal reported instances of human rights violations and abuses, was undertaken.

Under a similarly difficult and dynamic situation on the ground, the Council is meeting today to discharge its responsibility to effectively address the Syrian conflict. We appreciate the efforts of both the Russian Federation and Turkey in brokering the nationwide ceasefire that commenced two days ago and is currently holding. We are convinced that the Council's backing of the ceasefire will only add to its legitimacy. Our support of a ceasefire and an end to the fighting signals to ordinary Syrian civilian men, women and children that we are not oblivious to their prolonged suffering.

We have collectively on many occasions pronounced, first, undivided support for Special Envoy De Mistura's effort to bring together conflicting parties to the negotiating table, and secondly, that the only resolution to the conflict is through a political process. It is our belief that the Council's support for the ceasefire and the subsequent Astana process will lead to a more substantive political dialogue among the conflicting parties, hence our support for resolution 2336 (2016) just adopted.

As Malaysia will be vacating its seat on the Council in a few hours' time, my delegation hopes that the positive momentum of the Council's action on the situation in Syria over the past few weeks continues to gather strength for the sake of the long-suffering Syrians, especially civilians, non-combatants, women and children.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you and the Spanish delegation for the productive and excellent stewardship of the Council this month. I would also like to wish all colleagues a happy and prosperous new year.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2336 (2016). Japan also welcomes the efforts of the Russian Federation and Turkey to bring about a nationwide cessation of hostilities. Japan supported the draft resolution because we hope that the cessation of hostilities across Syria can open a path to the fundamental improvement of the devastating humanitarian situation there.

As with resolution 2328 (2016), adopted unanimously two weeks ago (see S/PV.7841), the United Nations should coordinate humanitarian assistance efforts under this cessation of hostilities. We do not want to hear any more reports by the United Nations or other implementing partners of obstructions or delays in gaining access to besieged or hard-to-reach areas by the Syrian Government. We urge the Syrian Government to take measures to allow immediate and unhindered access.

Japan calls upon the guarantors of the cessation of hostilities to elaborate monitoring mechanisms with the United Nations and the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) task force. We take note of the serious concern about the possibility of further attacks on civilians in all areas of Syria. Japan urges Russia and Turkey, as guarantors, to fully address these concerns. As prescribed in paragraph 3 of the resolution, we look forward to the Astana meeting to be held in January. Japan hopes the meeting will have the participation of key regional stakeholders and will meaningfully contribute to Special Envoy De Mistura's formal political process.

As a member of the Council and of the ISSG, Japan reiterates its determination to contribute responsibly to addressing the situation in Syria. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Spain for its excellent presidency this month. I would also like to thank the five outgoing non-permanent members for their assiduous efforts in the Council during their two-year terms.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I did not intend to speak here today, as it seems to me that resolution 2336 (2016), which we have just adopted, speaks for itself. But as all members of the Security Council have spoken it would probably be odd, to say the least, if one of the sponsors of the resolution and a member of the Council simply stayed silent. This would probably be seen as perhaps not endorsing or approving of what has been said by my colleagues. Far be it from this.

As I take the floor, the natural first step is to thank all of the members of the Council for voting in favour of the resolution we elaborated together with the Turkish delegation. We would like to individually

thank the delegation of Turkey for its very substantive contribution to the work on the resolution.

All of us know that this has been a very difficult year — a year which comes to an end in our capital in only two and a half hours. It was very difficult from the point of view of the work of the Security Council on a Syrian settlement, but the fact that we are concluding this year by unanimously adopting two such resolutions means that if all of us together look together at certain objectives rather than attempt to gain self-interested benefit, then we are able to make important decisions.

During this year, as all of us will recall, a number of very serious efforts were undertaken to achieve a radical improvement in the settlement of the Syrian crisis. All of us remember the numerous meetings of our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, and the United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, always leading to serious agreements that, for reasons that I am not going to go into now, unfortunately remained unfulfilled. At the end of this year, the Russian Federation and Turkey, alongside the Syrian Government, in contact with opposition groups, took it upon themselves to reach a number of very important agreements that were enshrined in the documents published on 29 December and which were then circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

This is a very important initiative. The resolution adopted by us today speaks to the need to comply with a cessation of hostilities regime in Syria and to the very important meeting in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, which, in Astana, in just two and a half hours, will become a member of the Security Council. At that meeting, delegations of the opposition and the Government will for the first time meet face to face, all of this in the context of efforts that have been undertaken under the Security Council's mandate pursuant to resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016) and other very well-known documents. All of this is enshrined in the resolution adopted here today. It is very important indeed that the Security Council today backed these efforts made by Russia and Turkey.

I do not wish to level criticisms today, but I would like to delicately convey to my colleagues that this is a very complicated process. Everything we achieve is the result of enormous effort, so let us be clear. I urge members to help us, and if they cannot or do not want to help then I urge them not to complicate things, cast doubt on the agreements reached or attempt to reinterpret them in some way. I would ask them not to simply repeat outdated clichés ad infinitum. Some representatives have been repeating the same clichés for six years now, despite the fact that it achieves nothing. That is not helpful. We must work very seriously to ensure that, in 2017, we are able to achieve a political settlement to the crisis in Syria. We are convinced that if the international community is guided by the objective of upholding the interests of the Syrian people and restoring stability in the region as a whole, then we can achieve success.

My last comment is an expression of gratitude to the Council members who are leaving us today, including the delegation of Spain, which during this long difficult month of 31 days has carried out duties that are coming to an end almost at midnight on the very last day.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement briefly in my national capacity.

Spain voted in favour of resolution 2336 (2016) and welcomes its unanimous adoption. We express our sincere gratitude to Turkey and the Russian Federation for their efforts in achieving this consensus, having reached an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, and moving forward towards a political solution to the crisis in Syria.

We voted in favour of the resolution while bearing in mind the unspeakable suffering of the Syrian people and the fact that the monitoring of the ceasefire must be conducted transparently and impartially and that information must be provided to the Security Council in a timely manner. We are also aware that the next steps in the political process must be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. We want to be very clear on this point. It is not enough for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to simply be associated with the Astana talks; he must play a central role and ensure that we do not lose sight of the provisions of resolution 2254 (2015). In that regard, we once again welcome the changes that have been made to the text of the resolution, which was submitted by the Russian Federation.

Finally, the European Union and its 28 member States have much to contribute to Syrian initiatives. The European Union is not only the country's main financial donor, but it will also be a key player in rebuilding the country when the necessary political conditions are in place. Only a united, democratic and peaceful Syria will be able to put a lasting end to the terrorism wrought by Da'esh. Spain is bidding farewell to the Security

Council in the hope that the resolution that we adopted today will be a first step in that direction.

I honestly do not see a better way to conclude Spain's presidency of the Security Council. I already bid farewell to Council members on 21 December and, at that time, I said that if we were to meet again, it would only be in order to receive good news, and that is indeed the case — a resolution adopted unanimously by all 15 members. I would like to thank Council members once again for the kind words I heard in the Chamber today. This effort would not have been successful without the help of all Council members.

There are only 10 hours left in the Spanish presidency. I believe that we will not have any further meetings in the next 10 hours, so I will take this opportunity to definitively wish all Council members a very happy New Year. I strongly hope that the people of Syria will achieve peace. As a continuing member of the General Assembly, Spain will remain very attentive to the work carried out in this Chamber. I also wish our dear friends from Sweden, who are seated here in the Chamber, every success during their presidency, which promises to be very favourable.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers on my list.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.